JORDAN HENDERSON • GERRARD BACK AT ANFIELD • REDS IN FA YOUTH CUP FINAL • BILLY LIDDELL

LIVERPOOL FC





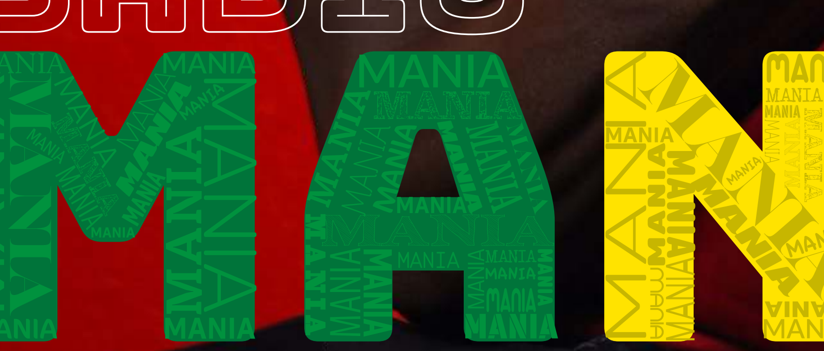


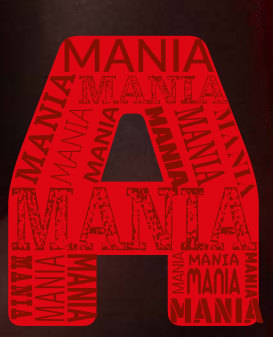


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Official Liverpool FC Monthly Magazine

SADIO





WHY EVERYONE LOVES OUR NUMBER TEN

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Reach Sport
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OUR FORTRESS

Minutes before kick-off ahead of the Premier League clash with Tottenham Hotspur last month and the atmosphere is building as the crowd inside Anfield prepares to roar the Reds to victory. The 2-1 win stretched Liverpool's unbeaten run at home to 37 league matches.





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LATE SHOW

The look of delight says it all as Mo Salah and Bobby Firmino celebrate the Reds' late winner against Spurs. Bobby scored the opening goal in the 2-1 victory while Mo's 90th-minute header sparked the confusion that led to defender Toby Alderweireld putting through his own goal.




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Spurred on

"For me, when we scored [to make it] 2-1 [v Tottenham] it was relief. It was not like bouncing around and stuff. The crowd was unbelievable, really unbelievable. They were not nervous. They knew it could happen – 'Come on, let's try'. They were really behind us and I love that."

"I just want to get better"

When selfless dedication meets pure class, you get Sadio Mane – but he's far too modest to agree!

Sadio Mane's sensational season sees him go into April vying with team-mate Mo Salah for the honour of finishing as Liverpool FC's top scorer for 2018/19.

The prolific pair are also in contention for the Premier League's Golden Boot award as the campaign enters its final six weeks.

The Senegalese striker has improved his goal-tally year by year since signing from Southampton in 2016 and his total of 17 in the league ahead of his return to St Mary's on Friday 5 April was another new high.

Words: William Hughes


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WU
Western Union



Sadio's annual improvement has manifested itself in other ways than goals. He was named as the club's player of the season in his debut campaign of 2016/17 despite missing part of it while representing Senegal at the Africa Cup of Nations.

Last term his flow was disrupted by a suspension and a couple of niggling injuries, but – in a typically unselfish move – he helped accommodate Salah's arrival and subsequent goal-fest by switching wings from right to left.

His eye for goal saw Jürgen Klopp move him into a central striking berth for the game against Watford at the end of February. But while the boss had every faith in a player he has long admired to deliver the goods in the new role, his team-mates weren't as re-assuring!

"The day before the game, the coach called me and told me. 'Sadio, you have a new role – I know you can play there'," he explains. "To be honest I was surprised because I have never played there before.

"I looked at my team-mates and almost everyone was laughing at me! I said, 'Trust me and from today call me Ronaldo or Firmino!' Gini [Wijnaldum] said, 'Okay, but you have to score – if you do we will call you Ronaldo, number nine'!

"There was nothing to say afterwards because I was lucky enough to score two goals and I was a happy boy, especially because the team managed to get a win."

Sadio's humble nature may dispose him to describe himself as lucky but there was little fortunate about his goals given the quality of them.

Trent Alexander-Arnold provided the assists for both with fine balls into the box and Sadio scored the first with a powerful header before producing a moment of brilliance to net his second with a cheeky back-heel after his first touch had taken him away from goal.

BOBBY AND MO MAKE EVERYTHING EASIER AND YOU CAN SEE THAT WE ENJOY PLAYING TOGETHER – THEY ARE BOTH VERY GOOD PLAYERS

In the days and weeks afterwards, hundreds of budding Premier League stars were practising the skill on playgrounds and training pitches up and down the country, mention of which brings a wide smile to Sadio's face.

"It may have been a surprise to most people because they have never seen me in training but I sometimes try to do it at Melwood and sometimes I even score goals like that! It is very hard to do it in a game but I just used the necessary moment and it worked out very well.

"It was very nice to hear a lot of kids were trying it [the back-heel] because it is always important for us as role-models to try and give something positive and you cannot imagine what the kids will pick up while watching a game.

"I am happy playing as a nine and on the left or right side.

If the team needs me as a striker, I will try my best again."

Mane believes the fact that he is now into his second season playing as part of a three-pronged attack alongside Salah and Roberto Firmino – creator of most of his goals – has helped him to have such a productive campaign.

"It is very easy now because we have played together for a while and we know how to move, with and without the ball, so the three of us always feel like we can cause opponents problems," he says.

"[Bobby and Mo] are both very good players and I am very happy to play alongside of them. They make everything easier and you can see that we enjoy playing together, so I think that is very good for the team.

"To be honest, I would say this is one of my best seasons and of course I always try to be better and better by working hard every day in training. That is what I'm trying to do and hopefully it can help bring success to the club."

Another determining factor in Mane's magnificent season has been the strong relationship he enjoys with his manager. Klopp has followed his no10's career for many years and has a strong level of trust in him.

"To be honest he is a great man, you can see it and he is a lovely person," says Sadio. "He loves all his players and is very close to his players too. He also demands a lot but he never puts pressure on us other than asking the best of us. He only asks you to do your best in whatever you are doing and also to enjoy it.

"I think that's important because under him everybody has progressed a lot as everyone can see. It's very important for us to work with him for more years."

Klopp recently labelled Sadio as "world-class" – a description the player admits is quite a compliment.

Mind you, his 2019 backs that up with the opening three months of the year bringing him eleven goals in a dozen games.

"I thought, 'Wow, what a compliment!' I will try to believe it



more and more and to do better and better. I always want to learn more and develop more and I'm always trying to do my best and push harder."

His two goals in the 4-2 defeat of Burnley last month saw him become only the third African player in Liverpool's history to score 50 goals for the club [after Gordon Hodgson and Salah], a feat celebrated elsewhere in this issue.

He wasted no time in going about the next 50 too. Goals 51 and 52 punctuated a brilliant team display at the Allianz Arena as Liverpool become the first team in seven years to prevent Bayern Munich reaching the quarter-finals of the competition.

The Reds' 3-1 victory was the latest achievement in a tournament to which Sadio took a shine in 2017/18. As well as adding his name to the list of men to have scored in the final, he also netted his first hat-trick for the Reds when they met FC Porto in the last 16 – a fact that won't be lost on the Portuguese side and their coach, Sergio Conceicao, as the sides prepare to meet again this month, this time in the last eight of Europe's elite competition.

The back-heel that had kids copying Sadio the next day everywhere!

LFC'S OTHER AFRICAN-BORN CENTURIONS

Bruce Grobbelaar: the charismatic keeper stands in the top 10 list of Liverpool's all-time appearance-makers. He famously went from fighting in the Rhodesian Bush to keeping goal for the Reds between 1981 to 1994, winning a host of medals during his 628-game career at Anfield.

Gordon Hodgson: with 241 goals from 377 games for Liverpool, the South African forward was the club's first long-term prolific marksman, spending over a decade at Anfield. He later won caps for England and also played cricket for Lancashire!

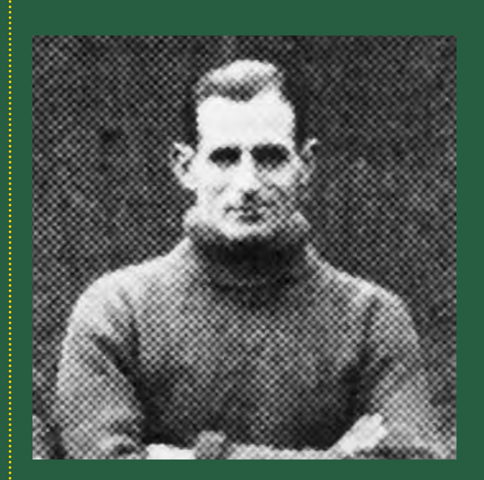


Arthur Riley: a part of the same South African touring team that defeated Liverpool in a friendly at Anfield in October 1924 as Gordon Hodgson, the goalkeeper was duly recruited by the Reds and played 338 times between 1925 and 1939.

Craig Johnston: the Johannesburg-born Aussie who ended up playing representative football for England at youth level! The energetic all-action midfielder spent seven years at Anfield in the Eighties, scoring 40 goals in 271 games while winning five league titles, an FA Cup, a European Cup and two League Cups.



Not forgetting...**Djimi Traore**: not born in Africa but a Champions League winner with the Reds in 2005 who represented Mali in international football. The rangy defender made 141 appearances for Liverpool after being signed by Gerard Houllier from French club Laval in 1999.








What a performance against Bayern...



One staggering statistic Sadio set in that win over Bayern saw him overtake Steven Gerrard and Roberto Firmino as Liverpool's outright highest scorer of away-goals in European competition with seven. His brace in the Allianz took his tally to seven to set the new high – an astonishing feat considering this is only his second season playing in European football with the Reds and the club's rich history of successes on far foreign fields.

Four days after that win in Bavaria the boy from Bambali was at it again, opening the scoring at Fulham following a lovely one-two with Firmino as the Reds chiselled out a vital 2-1 win on the banks of the Thames.

His display at Craven Cottage also took his goals per shots ratio in Premier League action to 24.6 per cent, his best return yet since moving to England from RB Salzburg in 2014/15. That goal also took his total for the season to a round 20 and his exploits since the turn of the year have also seen him enter the conversations about the identity of this season's Player of the Year awards. Pressure. What pressure?

"As players we are relaxed and we are honestly enjoying being at the top of the table. Now we know what we have to do if we want to achieve big things at the end of the season.

AS PLAYERS WE ARE RELAXED AND WE ARE ENJOYING FIGHTING TO BE AT THE TOP OF THE TABLE

MANE HAPPY RETURNS

When Sadio changed his shirt number at the beginning of this season – from 19 to 10 – fans who'd bought shirts from the club with the former number were able to return with a receipt for a new shirt, and LFC Foundation arranged for all the no19 shirts to be donated to KitAid.

KitAid is a registered charity which recycles no-longer-needed strips and equipment and distributes them (through trusted partners) to underprivileged children and adults in some of the world's poorest countries. Now in its 21st year, it has sent 600,000 items of kit to children and adults in over 55 countries since 1998.

Last year a team of KitAid volunteers travelled to Malawi in East Africa as part of Friends of Mulanje Orphanages (FOMO) who run 14 centres where they feed and clothe 3,000 children a day. At the airport they got an immediate sense of what football means to the country's youngsters when they were greeted by a group of Liverpool fans called Kop Malawi, and later they attended a tournament.



KitAid duly gave the shirts to FOMO to distribute in Malawi – and you can imagine how much joy that generated in a place where Sadio is hugely popular.

"In many parts of Africa players are unable to participate in matches unless they have a kit," explains a KitAid spokesperson. "We rely solely on volunteers who kindly collect for us in many parts of the UK.

"Together we've been able to bring smiles to faces all over the world. Your support is greatly valued and has really made a big difference to so many people."

Kit collections are usually boxed up in Liverpool every three months and for the latest news you can follow on Twitter @kitaid.



"It would be a great thing and, of course, it is the dream of everyone. We will be doing everything we can to do that by focusing and by keeping our belief."

The factor that Klopp has often referred to as the 'power of Anfield' could also have a defining effect.

"The support is amazing and this is what we need, especially when we are doing quite well," he explains. "We haven't lost at Anfield for a long time and part of that is because our fans are here.

"We have 11 players and they are our twelfth man so I think that is why we have done so well at Anfield for so long. Twelve against eleven – it's quite difficult for the opponent to win against 12 players!"

One statistic doing the rounds after the win at Fulham was that at least one of the front-three had scored in 31 of Liverpool's 42 games this season.

Another important element in the Reds' productive campaign has been their defensive resilience. Following the game against Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday 31 March, Liverpool boasted the best defensive record in the league with only 19 goals conceded. A big part of that has been the base provided by Premier League ever-presents Alisson Becker and Virgil van Dijk.

"It is very lucky for Virgil because everyone is talking about him but don't forget I always come back to defend and then go up again!," Sadio jokes.

"But, yes, he is having a great season and everybody is very happy about that.

"Robertson, Matip, Trent, Lovren and Joe have done very well too. They have been doing great things for us as well as our keeper who is one of the best in the world. All of this is very good and positive for the club and really encouraging.

"We are a very close group and I think that helps when we go out on the pitch."

Sadio, who will be 27 years old on 10 April, signed a new long-term contract with the club earlier this season and has spoken of his desire to attain legendary status at Liverpool.

He was immensely proud of becoming the fifth African-born player in the club's history to bring up a century of appearances for the Reds, a milestone he achieved back in January.

"Of course I want to be a legend not only for Liverpool but also in the Premier League story and that is one of my targets. I will do everything possible to achieve everything possible.

"Reaching 100 games means a lot to me. To play this many games for a club like Liverpool is incredible.

Like I have always said, I am very happy to play for this club and every single day I am enjoying being here and trying to do everything to win something for this club."

If he continues to make the impact he has during the first three months of 2019, there's every chance of that happening sooner rather than later for the Reds' perfect 10.



REACHING 100 GAMES MEANS A LOT TO ME – TO PLAY THIS MANY GAMES FOR A CLUB LIKE LIVERPOOL IS INCREDIBLE





FIFTY UP!

Sadio Mane became the 56th Liverpool player to score a half-century of goals for the club when he wrapped up the 4-2 win over Burnley last month. It was his 109th game in an LFC shirt. The Senegalese striker also became only the fifth player to score in six successive Premier League games at Anfield, joining an illustrious list of Owen, Suarez, Salah and Torres. Here's a look at Super Sadio's strikes...



GOAL 1 ARSENAL (A) SUNDAY 14 AUGUST 2016
His first Liverpool goal on his Premier League debut for the club and also his favourite. It's not hard to see why! Taking a pass from Adam Lallana on the right touchline he runs at two Gunners defenders before cutting inside and arrowing a left-footed drive past Petr Cech to give the Reds a 4-1 lead. He celebrates by piggy-backing Jürgen Klopp!



GOAL 2 LEICESTER CITY (H) SATURDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2016
The first game played in front of the revamped Main Stand draws Anfield's biggest attendance since May 1977 as 53,075 enjoy the spectacle of Liverpool taking on the champions. Sadio is in superb form as he continues the impressive start to his Liverpool career by putting the finishing touches to a devastating team goal. Lucas, Roberto Firmino and Jordan Henderson are all involved as the captain sends Daniel Sturridge clear with a measured chip over the top. The striker back-heels inside for the unmarked Mane to scoop the ball over Leicester goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel and give the Reds a 2-0 advantage.

GOAL 3 HULL CITY (H) SATURDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2016
Sadio strikes to put the Reds 3-0 up by the interval as they see off Mike Phelan's Tigers, whose line-up includes Andy Robertson at left-back. Mane grabs his goal following good work from Adam Lallana. Spinning away from Ryan Mason on the corner of the Hull area, the midfielder picks out the Senegalese ace and he provides a fine turn and finish. Hull captain Curtis Davies says: "It's tough to try get in a tackle which makes them think again because literally one second Mane will be in that hole, then Lallana and then Coutinho."





GOAL 4 WEST BROM (H) SATURDAY 22 OCTOBER 2016

Emre Can releases Roberto Firmino down the left, and the Brazilian floats a cross over enabling Sadio to volley home his fourth of the season. The *Guardian* match report: "It was another example of the collective threat that Klopp cherishes in his teams, as his manic reaction testified." Klopp is not satisfied afterwards, saying: "When you play like this, it is difficult to be kind of satisfied with football games. Two-one keeps you more awake than 4-0."

GOAL 5 WATFORD (H) SATURDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2016

Liverpool produce a rampant display to go top of the Premier League table with Sadio showing the Hornets no mercy. His first goal comes following a short corner between Coutinho and Milner that allows the Brazilian to cross from the left. Mane's movement takes him in front of a defender before he glances a header up and over Heurelho Gomes to provide the breakthrough and bring belated reward for the Reds' attacking intent. It is the first of two goals he would score that afternoon.



GOAL 6 WATFORD (H) SATURDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2016

Sadio strikes again to make it 5-0 on the hour-mark. Roberto Firmino confuses defender Jose Holebas before he tees up Mane. "If we still had Suarez," sing the Kop, "he'd be on the bench." The *Times* match report opines: "Mane's contribution here, and in previous games, will have cheered Michael Edwards, the club's new sporting director, who, along with his staff, had tracked the Senegalese forward since his time at Red Bull Salzburg. Their assessments aligned with that of Klopp when discussing about pushing for the player in the summer and he is proving everything that they hoped he would be."



GOAL 7 BOURNEMOUTH (A) SUNDAY 4 DECEMBER 2016

A fluorescent blur as he races forward in that season's third strip, he latches on to a lofted pass from Emre Can and gets in behind Bournemouth centre-back Nathan Ake before beating keeper Artur Boruc to the ball and flicking it past him with a first-time finish to give Liverpool the lead at Dean Court.



GOAL 8 EVERTON (A)
MONDAY 19 DECEMBER 2016

Sadio gives Reds an early Christmas present when he strikes in stoppage-time at Goodison Park. Daniel Sturridge's low drive beats Blues keeper Joel Robles but hits the upright and Sadio is first to react, beating Everton centre-backs Ramiro Funes Mori and Ashley Williams to the rebound to tap home the only goal of the game.



GOAL 9 SUNDERLAND (A)
MONDAY 2 JANUARY 2017

A poacher's effort from inside the six-yard box to put the Reds 2-1 up at the Stadium of Light. Alberto Moreno's corner from the right is inadvertently flicked on by the head of Sunderland centre-back Papy Djilobodji and Sadio is first to react, sweeping the ball past Black Cats keeper Vito Mannone.



GOAL 10 TOTTENHAM (H)
SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2017

Back from the Africa Cup of Nations, Sadio soon shows how much he has been missed with two goals in three minutes that effectively see off Spurs' challenge His first goal arrives after Adam Lallana picks Victor Wanyama's pocket close to halfway and Roberto Firmino finds Gini Wijnaldum. The Dutchman spots Mane's intelligent run and plays the most incisive of passes. Mane then holds off the attentions of Ben Davies to fire past Hugo Lloris. The former Southampton man's song rings out around Anfield and has barely finished before he strikes again...



GOAL 11 TOTTENHAM (H)
SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2017

Mane pounces on Eric Dier's poor control and squares for Lallana. Goalkeeper Hugo Lloris makes a save and then denies Firmino but Mane is on hand to gleefully tuck away the loose ball. With 11 goals and four assists, no Liverpool player has been directly involved in more league goals than the Senegalese to this point in the season. "I don't think it is fair to the other players to say, 'Because of Sadio Mane we win'," says Wijnaldum afterwards. "Of course he is a great player – he helps us with his speed and he scores goals – but I think it is more about the team than only Sadio."

GOAL 12 ARSENAL (H) SATURDAY 4 MARCH 2017

Sadio takes his Premier League goals tally for his debut season with the Reds to a round dozen with an unerring finish to put the Reds 2-0 up from Firmino's precise pass following a lovely team move. The Brazilian returns the favour after Mane sets him up for the opener with a brilliant curling cross. The *Liverpool Echo* match report highlights Mane's influential campaign. "It's certainly difficult to imagine where Liverpool would be this season without the Senegalese whose pace and direct threat simply terrified the Arsenal backline here."



GOAL 13 EVERTON (H) SATURDAY 1 APRIL 2017

A stunning solo strike puts the Reds into an eighth-minute lead in the 228th Merseyside derby. Sadio plays a one-two with Roberto Firmino before slaloming his way across the field from right to left before angling a left-footed drive beyond Blues keeper Joel Robles and into the net. Unfortunately, the win comes at a cost as Sadio hobbles off following an innocuous looking collision with Leighton Baines that brings his debut campaign to a premature end after 29 appearances and 13 goals.

GOAL 14 WATFORD (A)
SATURDAY 12 AUGUST 2017

Sadio gets the Reds' season up and running with a brilliant goal at Vicarage Road. He is heavily involved in the build-up play and then latches onto a clever pass from Emre Can to burst into the penalty area, take a touch and then steer a sublime shot beyond Hornets keeper Heurelho Gomes and into the net to draw Jürgen Klopp's men level at 1-1.





GOAL 15 CRYSTAL PALACE (H)
SATURDAY 19 AUGUST 2017

Patience proves a virtue as Sadio's strike in the final quarter is enough to secure maximum points. Palace midfielder Luka Milivojevic is under no pressure when he intercepts a cross-field ball facing his own goal. But two careless touches carry the ball away and into the path of Mane who seizes on the invitation to sweep his shot beyond keeper Wayne Hennessey from close range. "The biggest thing the team did last year was getting fourth without Sadio for pretty much half a year," says Klopp afterwards.

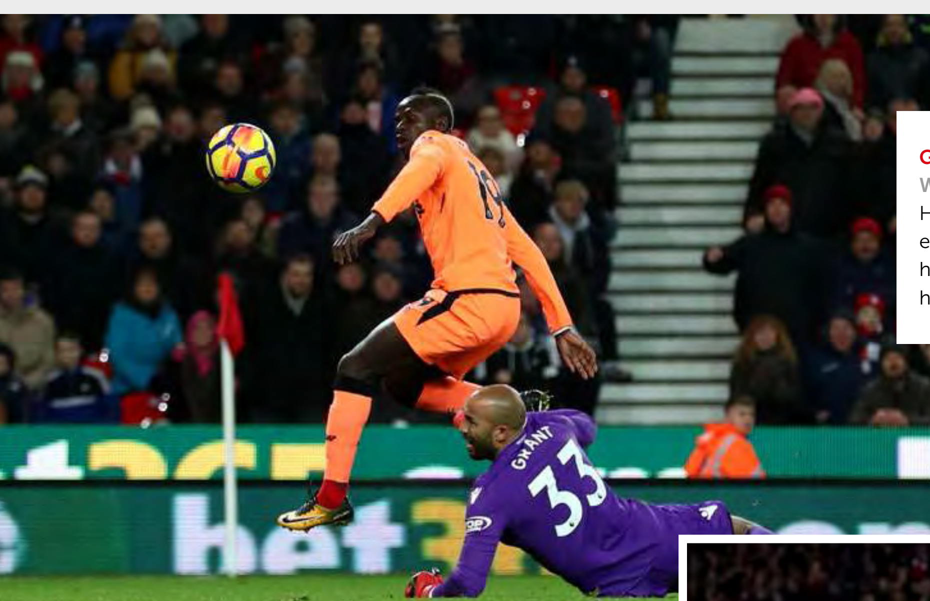
GOAL 16 ARSENAL (H)
SUNDAY 27 AUGUST 2017

When Arsenal lose the ball in the Liverpool penalty area own half, the Reds punish them ruthlessly with a wonderful counter-attack. Joe Gomez wins the ball and feeds Gini Wijnaldum, who in turn moves the ball on to Emre Can, playing it swiftly to Roberto Firmino who plays the final pass to Mane. He cuts inside from the left and curls a beautiful shot out of the reach of keeper Petr Cech to put the Reds two goals to the good.



GOAL 17 SEVILLA (A)
TUESDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2017

A diving header to put Liverpool 2-0 up at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan. Philippe Coutinho's corner from the right is glanced on by Roberto Firmino and Sadio steals in at the far post before launching himself forward to score by beating keeper Sergio Rico with a superb diving header.



GOAL 18 STOKE CITY (A)
WEDNESDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2017
He puts the Reds ahead at the bet365 Stadium with an exquisite finish. Receiving a pass from Dominic Solanke, he takes one touch to create the chance and then dinks his finish over the advancing Stoke keeper Lee Grant.

GOAL 19 SPARTAK MOSCOW (H)
WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER 2017
The Reds romp to victory in this must-win Champions League clash, the last of their six group games. Sadio scores twice in the second half in front of the Kop, his first being the goal of the night. James Milner sends over a cross from the left and Mane smashes in a spectacular volley with venomous power which tests the strength of the roof of the net. It puts Liverpool 4-0 up and ends any question of whether they will progress to the knockout stages.



GOAL 20 SPARTAK MOSCOW (H)
WEDNESDAY 6 DECEMBER 2017
Sadio also scores the Reds' sixth of the night against Spartak. Substitute Daniel Sturridge is the provider, setting up his fellow attacker with a pass across goal. although Sadio slightly overruns the ball, he drags his foot backwards to provide an inventive finish. In the end, the Reds finish with seven and stand-in captain Philippe Coutinho walks off with the matchball after claiming the first hat-trick of his Anfield career.



GOAL 21 BURNLEY (A)
MONDAY 1 JANUARY 2018
A stunning strike at Turf Moor to put the Reds in front. Taking Trent Alexander-Arnold's low cross with his back to goal on his right foot, he swivels to beat Clarets keeper Tom Heaton with a spectacular left-footed shot on the turn from just inside the area. It breaks the deadlock and gives the Reds their first goal of 2018.



GOAL 22
MANCHESTER CITY (H)
SUNDAY 14 JANUARY 2018

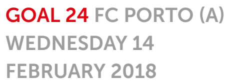
A footballing feast sees the Reds edge a seven-goal thriller with Sadio scoring the goal that puts his side 3-1 up just after the hour mark. He had just struck the post with a right-footed effort but is celebrating soon afterwards as the Reds again counter at speed. Mo Salah bursts away from Fernandinho and Nicolas Otamendi before seeking out Mane, who produces a stunning left-footed finish to beat City keeper Ederson from the edge of the penalty area. "A perfect advert for the Premier League," says Klopp after his team become the first of the season to beat Guardiola's men.





GOAL 23 **FC PORTO (A)**
WEDNESDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2018

It is a night to remember for Sadio and Liverpool at the Estadio do Dragao. He opens the scoring when he slots a low drive under the body of Porto keeper Jose Sa after determined approach play by Gini Wijnaldum, whose surge into the area ends with the ball rolling into Mane's path.



GOAL 24 **FC PORTO (A)**
WEDNESDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2018

A classic counter-attack which sees Sadio involved from start to finish. Mo Salah picks out the run of Roberto Firmino and although keeper Sa makes a good save low to his left, he cannot prevent the rebound running loose and Sadio is first on the scene to cushion a side-footed finish into the net.



GOAL 25 FC PORTO (A)
WEDNESDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2018

A long-range strike to complete his first Liverpool hat-trick. Collecting a throw-in from Andy Robertson just inside the Porto half, he flicks a pass to Danny Ings before taking the return ball and progressing towards the box before rifling in a powerful drive which flies past the despairing dive of Sa to give the Reds a 5-0 win and all but book a place in the quarter-finals, as well as earning the matchball for himself.



GOAL 26 WEST HAM UNITED (H)
SATURDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2018

A breathtaking goal that sees the Reds move from one end of the field to the other in a passage of play that starts with goalkeeper Loris Karius. As the Reds swarm towards the Kop, Roberto Firmino plays a perfectly-weighted pass for the overlapping Andy Robertson whose low cross is finished in style by Sadio with his shot going in off the post to beat visiting goalkeeper Adrian and put Liverpool 4-1 up against David Moyes' Hammers.



GOAL 27 NEWCASTLE UNITED (H)
SATURDAY 3 MARCH 2018

Another in the catalogue of mesmerising team-goals as Sadio doubles the Reds' advantage over Rafael Benitez's Newcastle. The move culminates in Mane being released by Roberto Firmino following a clever diagonal run and he takes a touch and opens up his body before unleashing a thunderous shot beyond Newcastle keeper Martin Dubravka. "It was a difficult game for us but our perseverance paid off in the end," he says later as the Reds stay second in the Premier League standings.

GOAL 28 CRYSTAL PALACE (A)
SATURDAY 31 MARCH 2018

A clever near-post finish from James Milner's cross to bring the Reds level at Selhurst Park. He is involved in the build-up too before the ball is worked from right to left where Milner skips past Eagles defender Aaron Wan-Bissaka before drilling his cross into the danger zone. Sadio nips in front of ex-Reds centre-back Mamadou Sakho and steers a first-time effort past keeper Wayne Hennessey.





GOAL 29 MANCHESTER CITY (H)
WEDNESDAY 4 APRIL 2018

A jubilant Anfield is absolutely bouncing as Sadio puts the Reds 3-0 up after barely half-an-hour of their eagerly anticipated Champions League quarter-final against City. Mo Salah lifts a perfect cross from inside the penalty area and the Senegalese striker darts in between Fernandinho and Kyle Walker to beat keeper Ederson with a powerful downwards header and put Liverpool in firm control of the tie. The *Daily Telegraph*: "'Anfield is unique. It lives, it breathes. It gives us strength,' is one verse on a mural on a wall inside the stadium and how those words rang true as the chants rang around again and again." Allez, allez, allez!

GOAL 30 BOURNEMOUTH (H)
SATURDAY 14 APRIL 2018

An early strike to put the Reds on their way to a comfortable win over the Cherries. Skipper Jordan Henderson picks out Sadio's run in the centre of the penalty area and although Bournemouth keeper Asmir Begovic parries his header, the speedster is first to the loose ball, sweeping the rebound beyond the Bosnian keeper.



GOAL 31 AS ROMA (H)
TUESDAY 24 APRIL 2018

Another scintillating Champions League night at Anfield sees Liverpool threaten to blow Roma out of the water with five goals inside the opening 70 minutes. The front three are electric with braces from Mo Salah and Bobby Firmino bookending Sadio's strike. Salah is the provider, crossing from the right of the six-yard box for Sadio to slide the ball home past a certain Alisson Becker. Two goals by the visitors in the final 10 minutes leave the tie in the balance but the Reds go home happy with a three-goal first leg advantage that gives them with high hopes of securing a place in the final.

GOAL 32 AS ROMA (A)
WEDNESDAY 2 MAY 2018
Sadio gives the Reds an important away-goal as he put the Reds in front at the Olympic Stadium inside the first 10 minutes. Midfielder Radja Nainggolan's poor pass is seized upon by Roberto Firmino just inside the Roma half and the Brazilian makes plenty of ground in a central area before sliding a pass into Sadio's path in the inside-left position. He takes a touch to advance to the edge of the six-yard box before lifting a clever finish keeper Alisson.

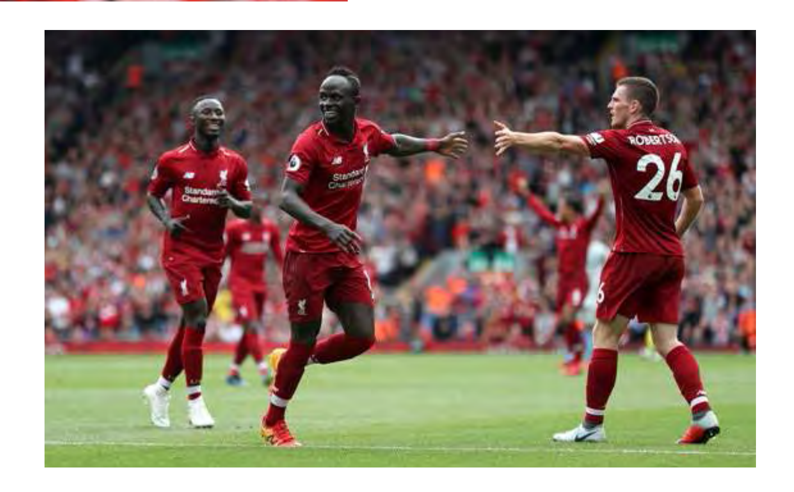


GOAL 33 REAL MADRID (KIEV)
SATURDAY 26 MAY 2018
The goal that gives the Reds hope in Kiev. Mane shows he is the man for the big occasion when he gets in front of Madrid keeper Keylor Navas to bring Liverpool level in the final. James Milner's outswinging corner from the right had been nodded down by centre-half Dejan Lovren and Sadio steals in to put the Reds on terms. Bedlam in the Reds end!



GOAL 34 WEST HAM UNITED (H)
SUNDAY 12 AUGUST 2018
The opening game of the season sees Sadio, now wearing the no10 jersey, get his tally up and running on the stroke of half-time. After Salah's cross from the left is blocked, Andy Robertson picks out Milner at the far post and his cut-back leaves Mane with the simple task of tapping the ball into an empty net from inside the six-yard box in front of the Kop with Hammers keeper Lukasz Fabianski and his defenders unable to react.

GOAL 35 WEST HAM UNITED (H)
SUNDAY 12 AUGUST 2018
His second goal of the curtain-raiser puts the Reds three goals to the good. Firmino is the provider flicking the ball into the penalty area for Sadio to turn and rifle home. The BBC Sport website later reports: "Mane's intelligence brought him off the wing into central positions for both his goals."



GOAL 36 CRYSTAL PALACE (A)
MONDAY 20 AUGUST 2018

A classic counter-attack wraps up the points at Selhurst Park. With the game in the closing stages, Liverpool clear a Palace corner and Mohamed Salah sets Sadio racing through from the halfway line. He outpaces defender Patrick van Aanholt and despite stumbling under the Dutchman's attempted tackle, shows remarkable balance to take the ball around Eagles keeper Wayne Hennessey before sliding his shot into the gaping goal.





GOAL 37 LEICESTER CITY (A)
SATURDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2018

A fine goal to put the Reds ahead at the King Power Stadium. Andy Robertson is the provider with good approach play down the left flank before the ball ricochets off Sadio from centre-back Harry Maguire's challenge and the Senegalese ace is first to react, clipping an instinctive finish past Foxes keeper Kasper Schmeichel.

GOAL 38 RED STAR BELGRADE (H)
WEDNESDAY 24 OCTOBER 2018

Sadio puts the disappointment of missing a penalty three minutes earlier behind him as he rounds off the scoring on another fine night of attacking Champions League football in L4. Accepting a pass from Daniel Sturridge, he takes a touch to take the ball out of his feet before stretching to stab past the advancing Red Star keeper Milan Borjan. The result puts the Reds top of their group at the halfway stage with six points from three matches.



GOAL 39 CARDIFF CITY (H)
SATURDAY 27 OCTOBER 2018

A goal all about persistence as Sadio doubles Liverpool's lead against the Bluebirds with a quarter of the game remaining. After being fed by Andy Robertson on the edge of the penalty area, he has to battle to evade a couple of Cardiff defenders but once he manages to wriggle free of them, he unleashes an unstoppable angled drive across keeper Neil Etheridge to ripple the net.

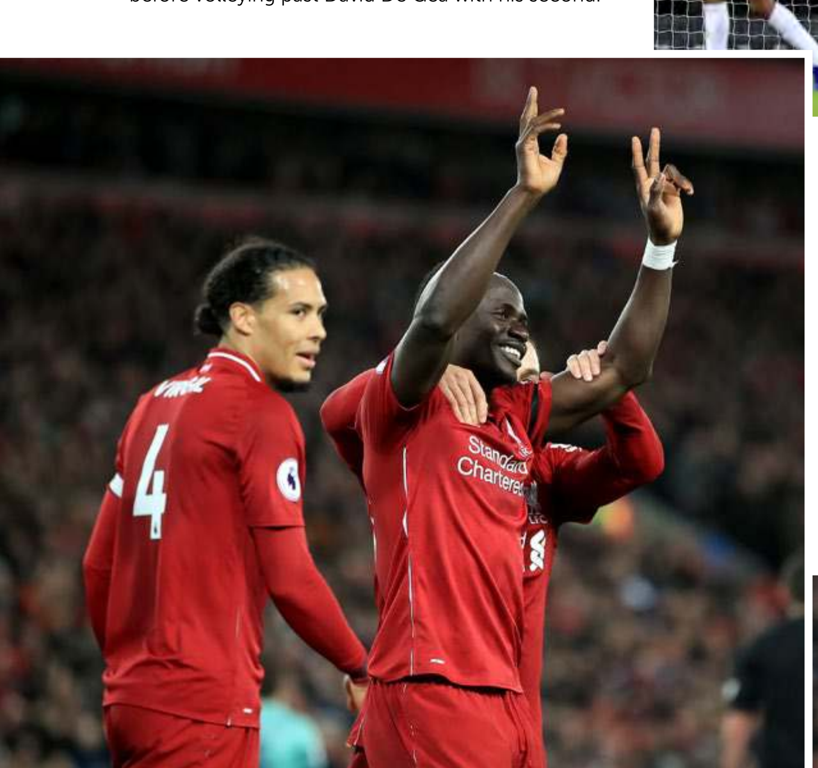


GOAL 40 CARDIFF CITY (H)
SATURDAY 27 OCTOBER 2018

A sublime goal that sees Sadio show incredible reserves of pace and stamina. The game is into the 87th minute when he receives the ball in his own half before finding Mo Salah in the centre circle. As the Egyptian ace carries the ball forward, Mane sprints forward with a diagonal run. Salah picks him out with a slide-rule pass and despite accelerating, Sadio shows incredible composure to loft an exquisite finish beyond Etheridge and make the game safe at 4-1.

GOAL 41 MANCHESTER UNITED (H)
SUNDAY 16 DECEMBER 2018

Fabinho's brilliant pass from midfield picks out Sadio's cross-field run from right to left inside the penalty area and he controls the ball on his chest with his first touch before volleying past David De Gea with his second.



GOAL 42 ARSENAL(H)
SATURDAY 29 DECEMBER 2018

Andy Robertson's superb diagonal pass from just inside the Arsenal half picks out Mo Salah in space in the penalty area and he cushions a square pass across the six-yard box for the onrushing Sadio to smash past goalkeeper Bernd Leno and give the Reds a 3-1 advantage.





GOAL 43 CRYSTAL PALACE (H)
SATURDAY 19 JANUARY 2019

A brilliant counter-attack to give the Reds a 4-2 lead late on. Alisson throws the ball out to Andy Robertson who exchanges passes with Sadio before sending the Reds no10 racing clear in the inside left channel. He takes two touches as he advances on goal before curling a measured low finish beyond the despairing dive of Palace keeper Julian Speroni.



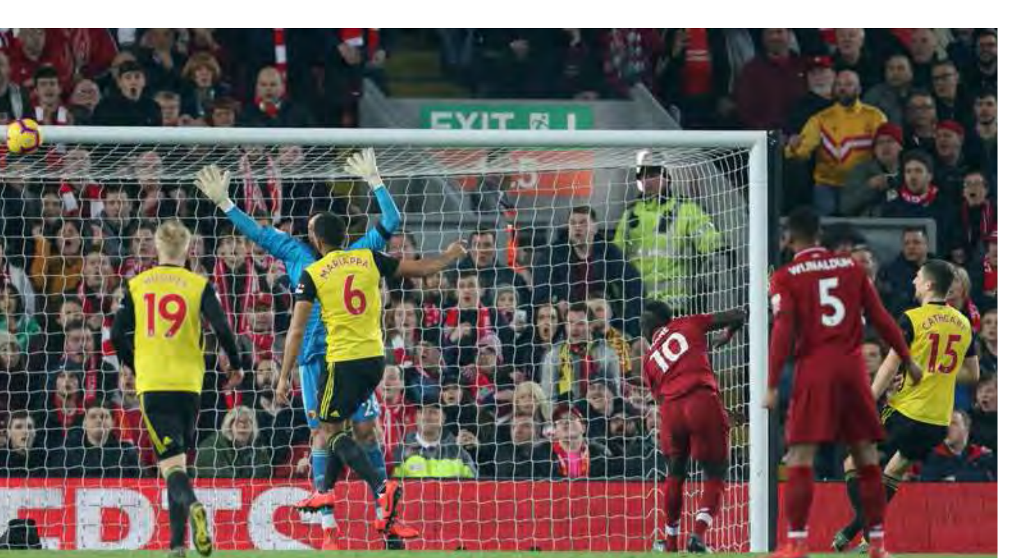
GOAL 44 LEICESTER CITY (H)
WEDNESDAY 30 JANUARY 2019
Just as he had done at the King Power Stadium earlier in the season, Sadio strikes early to give Liverpool the lead against Leicester. He is involved in the build-up, playing the ball out to Andy Robertson on the edge of the penalty area before darting into the area to take the return pass after the ball comes off centre-back Jonny Evans as he challenges Roberto Firmino. He takes a touch on the snowy surface, before bending a low shot beyond the dive of Foxes no1 Kasper Schmeichel.



GOAL 45 WEST HAM UNITED (A)
MONDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2019
Sadio scores away from Anfield for the first time since September to put the Reds in front at the London Stadium. Sublime skills from Adam Lallana on the right flank release James Milner and his low cross from the by-line picks out Mane with his back to goal. He takes one touch with his right foot before swivelling to dispatch his finish past Lukasz Fabianski with his left.


GOAL 46 BOURNEMOUTH (H)
SATURDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2019
Man-of-the-moment Sadio scores for the fourth game in a row for the first time in his senior career. Naby Keita feeds James Milner on the right and his cross sees Sadio steal in behind Joel Matip to plant a firm header beyond Cherries keeper Artur Boruc from just outside the six-yard box to give Liverpool the lead.





GOAL 47 WATFORD (H)
WEDNESDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2019
Another header to give the Reds an early advantage at the Anfield Road end. Sadio is involved in the build-up before James Milner finds Trent Alexander-Arnold on the right. The England full-back curls in a brilliant cross with pace and Sadio soars and stretches his neck muscles to beat Ben Foster from close range.

GOAL 48 WATFORD (H)
WEDNESDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2019
A moment of brilliant improvisation as he doubles the Reds' advantage over the Hornets with an impudent back-heel. Trent Alexander-Arnold again provides the assist, this time with a low centre into the box. Sadio's first touch is slightly heavy and takes him away from goal but he produces a fabulous finish to fox Foster and flick the ball home from 12 yards.

GOAL 49 BURNLEY (H)
SUNDAY 10 MARCH 2019
A wonderful finish to put Liverpool 2-1 up against the Clarets. Adam Lallana closes down midfielder Jeff Hendrick on the edge of the box and wins the ball with a fantastic challenge. The ball runs to Mo Salah who is tackled by Burnley left-back Charlie Taylor but the ball runs loose into the path of Sadio who curls a fantastic first-time strike beyond keeper Tom Heaton.



GOAL 50 BURNLEY (H)
SUNDAY 10 MARCH 2019
Sadio seals victory after Burnley had threatened to set nerves jangling with a late goal of their own. Daniel Sturridge picks out Mane's run with a wonderful pass from the right and his pace helps him nick the ball past Tom Heaton with his right foot before he rolls it into the empty Kop end net with his left.



OH MANE, MANE

A breakdown of Sadio's goals: where, when and how...

WHERE
Inside the area: 49
Outside the area: 1

33 at Anfield
At the Anfield Road end: 17
At the Kop end: 16

WHEN
0-15 mins 6
16-30 mins 13
31-45 mins 8
46-60 mins 8
61-75 mins 6
76-90 mins 9

HOW
Right-foot 32
Left-foot 13
Header 5

WHO
Providing the assists:
11: Roberto Firmino; 6: Mo Salah; 5: James Milner and Daniel Sturridge; 4: Andy Robertson and from opponent; 3: Trent Alexander-Arnold; 2: Adam Lallana, Emre Can and Gini Wijnaldum; 1, Jordan Henderson, Dominic Solanke, Danny Ings, Philippe Coutinho, Dejan Lovren and Fabinho.

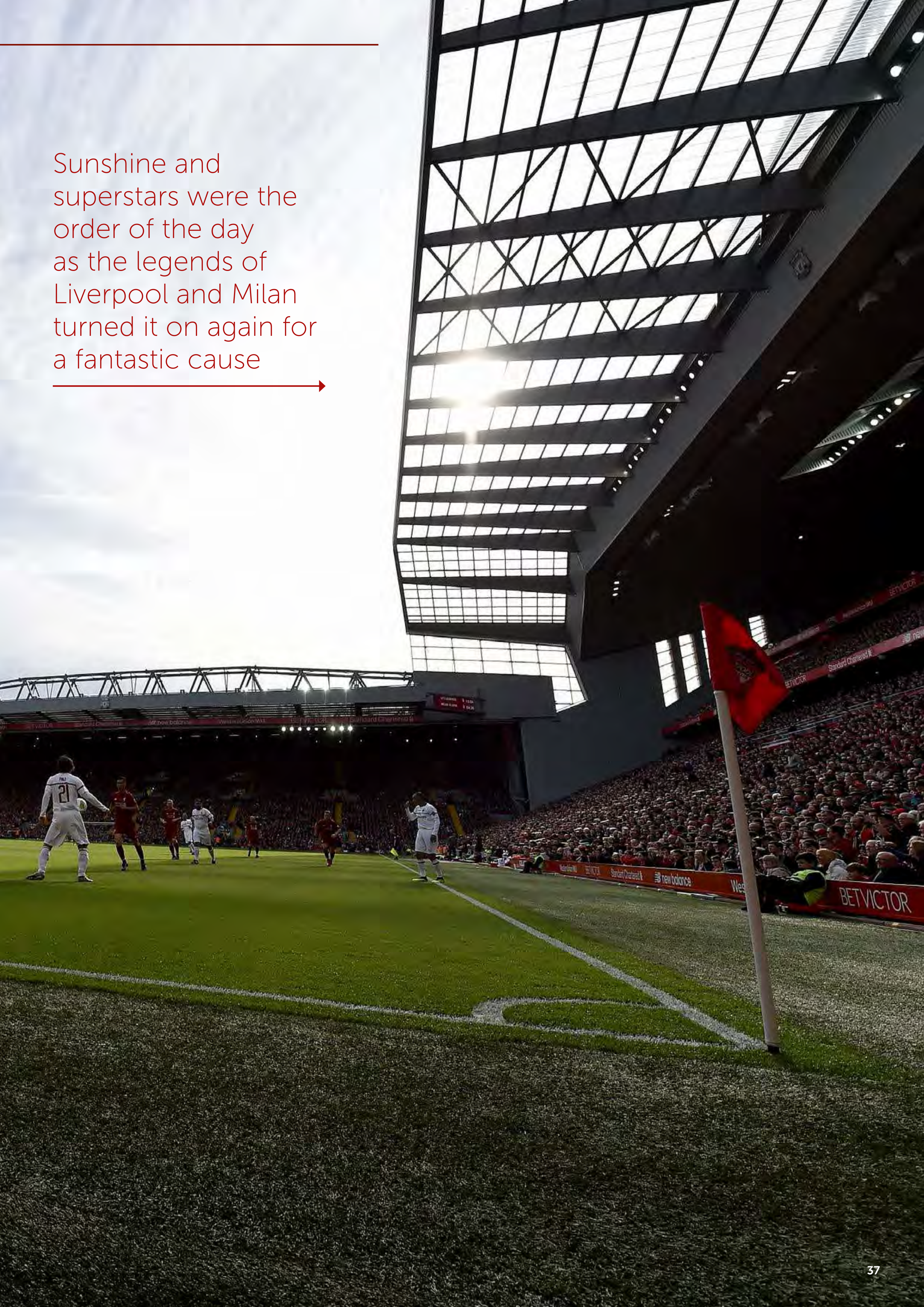


Pressure points

"Will there be nervous moments? Yes, for sure. Don't make them bigger than they are because there were nervous situations last year, two years ago, three years ago. Our tool to sort the situation is football. Our tool is football. That is the only thing we can do."

SATURDAY'S HEROES





Sunshine and superstars were the order of the day as the legends of Liverpool and Milan turned it on again for a fantastic cause


YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE
LIVERPOOL
FOOTBALL CLUB
EST • 1892
LFC FOUNDATION
LEGENDS CHARITY MATCH
LIVERPOOL FC LEGENDS
V AC MILAN GLORIE
ANFIELD STADIUM
23 MARCH 2019


LIVERPOOL
EST 1892


THE WALK OF CHAMPIONS.


Meet


Main Stand


Foundation
Liverpool FC
Dressing Room



Chalk up another moment of magic from one of Liverpool Football Club's all-time greats.

Older fans were privileged to see it countless times, but how fantastic an experience for younger supporters, and those who can't make it to Anfield as often as they would like, to see Steven Gerrard score a late winner in front of the Kop as Liverpool Legends beat Milan Glorie 3-2.

It was what the packed house had come to see – their cries for the skipper to shoot at every opportunity attest to that – as he duly provided a typically thrilling and satisfying finale to a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon at Anfield as club legends of the last 40 years came together to help raise funds for LFC Foundation.

Gerrard had dubbed it the finale of the 'trilogy' earlier that morning on social-media, the decider between two of world football's greatest teams who won a European Cup apiece in the mid-2000s.

It was an unorthodox Liverpool starting XI selected by manager Sir Kenny Dalglish, with Legends debutant Glen Johnson and 64-year-old Alan Kennedy as marauding wing-backs, and last year's hero Bjorn Tore Kvarme partnering Gerrard in midfield!

Kennedy certainly put his participation in LFC Foundation's community-focused walking-football sessions to good use with a classy eight-minute run-out before being replaced by another Legends debutant Djimi Traore.

The Malian's long legs were used to great effect straightaway with a fine sliding challenge on the surging Cafu – much better than the one in the first minute of the 2005 final anyway!

The rest of the side saw Jamie Carragher, Sami Hyypia and Daniel Agger impress in defence in front of Jerzy Dudek in goal, with the attacking trident of Dirk Kuyt, Luis Garcia and Robbie Fowler reunited after their brief time playing together for the Reds in 2006.

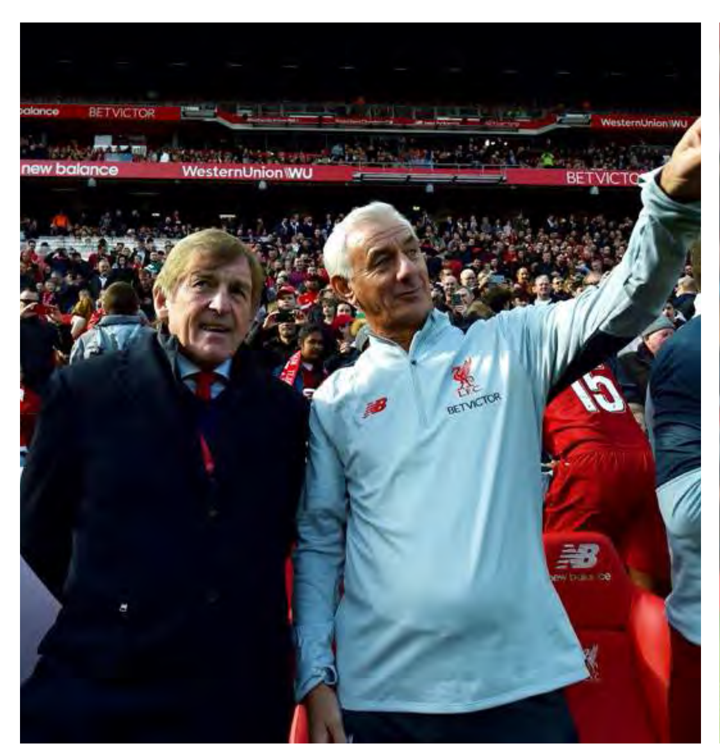
It would be a first glimpse of many of Milan's legendary stars for spectators too, with Kaka and Andrea Pirlo in particular showing some delightful touches in their midfield exchanges. Filippo Inzaghi even almost went into full Peter Crouch mode in front of the Kop early on with an acrobatic bicycle-kick but mistimed the effort.

Despite the stellar names on the Milan teamsheet it was the Reds enjoying the better of the openings, and they should have taken the lead on the quarter-hour. Fine link-up play from Gerrard and Kuyt saw the Dutchman cross for Garcia, only for him to steer a header wide from six yards.

Midway through the half, the silky Rui Costa thundered an effort narrowly over the bar for Milan, shortly before a delightful touch gave Liverpool the lead at the other end. Fowler produced a sublime looping volley to beat the giant Dida at the Anfield Road end from Johnson's pinpoint cross.

Agger and Garcia (twice) were then denied by Dida, Kuyt fired over and Kaka was superbly kept out by Dudek as the entertainment factor grew as the half-time whistle approached. It was a terrific stop from the Pole who had little to do up to that point.




new balance
WesternUnion WU
BETVICTOR


Standard Chartered
Fly Emirates
KALADZE
4

Dalglish made eight changes as much of the Legends side earned a much-merited rest after a solid half's work, with Sander Westerveld, Jason McAteer, Salif Diao, Patrik Berger, Steve McManaman, Michael Owen and Djibril Cisse all introduced at the start of the second period. We're sure the latter would have been as delighted to have been deployed on the right-wing as much as he was throughout the 2005/06 season by Rafa Benitez!

The French forward was a menace right along the frontline though, and his impact soon meant it was 2-0. Played through by Berger, Cisse stroked the ball past sub keeper Christian Abbiati at the Kop end to double the Reds' advantage.

The pantomime boos were out again for strike-partner Owen, although quieter and quieter as the years go by, who nearly squirmed past several Milan defenders to get a shot away soon after as the raft of subs settled into the, err, gentle pace of proceedings.

Like in last year's Foundation match, there was then an unerring free-kick from a world-class playmaker, and again for the opposition. Milan's no21 Pirlo stepped up from 20 yards to leave Westerveld rooted to the spot. It was never in doubt and, as when Xabi Alonso did the same trick for Bayern in 2018 from almost the same position, all four sides of the ground shared their appreciation of a master at work.

It stirred the Reds back into action though as they began raining shots on the Milan goal. Cisse slashed wide, Diao was nearly this year's unlikely scorer, Berger flashed an effort just over and Gerrard's drive was kept out much to the disappointment of the crowd, still urging the no8 to shoot every time the skipper was on the ball.











Somehow the Reds failed to restore the two-goal advantage when Smicer and the just-introduced John Aldridge got in each other's way three yards out, and they were made to pay when Giuseppe Pancaro superbly curled in from the edge of the area for the visitors. Milan weren't level for long, though!

Seconds after a penalty shout was turned down, Gerrard again surged forward, exchanged passes with Cisse, spun his man, twisted one way then the other before unleashing a trademark strike into the bottom corner of the net.

It was a similar goal to the one against Milan's rivals Inter in the Champions League in 2008, and proved to be the difference to the delight of the home support.

They may only be friendlies but Gerrard's influence continues to be as telling as in his playing days – his goal against Real Madrid here in the 2017 Legends match proved to be the winner too in that 4-3 victory. The real winners again though will be those in need who will benefit from another full-house contributing to the work of LFC Foundation.

See you all next year!







SIR KENNY DALGLISH

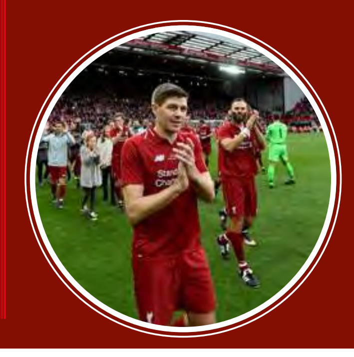
"Everybody won but the biggest winners are the ones that are going to receive the help with the finances.

"It's a tremendous credit to the people of Liverpool and for us to let the youngsters come in – the next generation of fans – it's important to get into the habit of getting here. And if they see something like this then they are going to want to come back."

STEVEN GERRARD

"It's always a special time to come to Anfield, especially when it's full, and just put the kit on. To play against Milan with all my ex-teammates, and to get the winner, is obviously a special feeling.

"Thanks to everyone for coming out and supporting all the boys. As soon as you get the invite you can't wait for the day. The lads give up their free time – they could be with their families elsewhere but they want to come here for a good cause and to entertain the supporters. Well done to all the lads."



GLEN JOHNSON

"I enjoyed being back at Anfield and the crowd seemed to enjoy themselves. I've got off to a winning start, so it's nice to be back.

"There were no nerves, just excitement – and a bit of caution, wondering how my body was going to cope with it! Once you get into it, it's enjoyable and the lads played some good football.

"It was great to be back on a pitch with those sort of players and against those names – it gives you a great buzz. It brings back a lot of fond memories. I had great times [here] over the years."

DANIEL AGGER

"Just to be here is good but to be on the pitch is even better. There's so many memories, and to play football in this stadium again is something that all of us enjoy.

"We come back to watch, but to be there ourselves is even better - even though we know we can't really perform the way we want to. But just to be there is enough. I haven't played for a long time, my body is not that good but it's only one game and you give it everything you have."





True faith

"The only thing I always knew is do the right thing as often as possible, stay focused on your own way, don't think about the other things around, and do it as much and do it as good as you can. Then, if you are good enough, it will happen. If not, then it will not happen. That is pretty easy. Experience showed me that the way I did it in the past worked, so I didn't change."



THE ART OF CAPTAINCY

Skipper Jordan Henderson on why the team is embracing the challenge, enjoying the pressure and giving everything for the Liverpool cause

There has been a lot of talk about the pressure of the title race – what do you make of it all?

You always get pressure when you play for Liverpool, but that's good. That's what you want as a player and that's why you come to a club like Liverpool in the first place, to play with pressure. We enjoy it and we look forward to it.

We've got a good squad of players so we can definitely cope with the games coming thick and fast such as Sunday to Wednesday and I'm sure we'll be ready for the remaining games. A lot of us have played two or three games a week regularly throughout our careers anyway so it's no different for us really.

You enjoy playing in the big games, the pressure games, and at the minute they're all big games so we enjoy that as players and try to use it in a positive way.

Do you think there are still plenty of twist and turns to come in the Premier League season?

Football changes very quickly. We all know that and the mood is still very positive around the place and everybody's just looking forward to the forthcoming games.

Obviously after the Everton game [goalless draw] we were all disappointed because we didn't win the game and we felt we'd done enough to do that. But then the next day you come in to training, you get on with it and you focus on the next game.

You mention the derby, the third game out of four the team had drawn in the Premier League – can you put your finger on why?

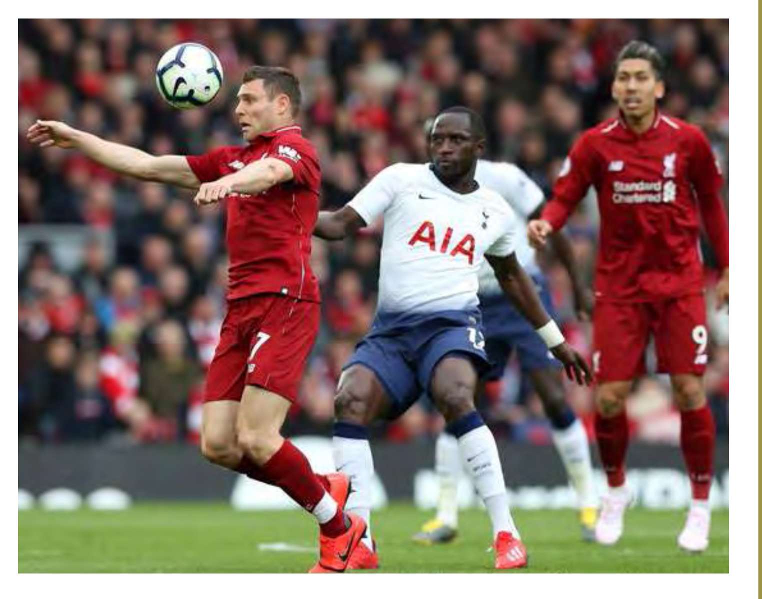
We've coped before when teams have come and sat off and made it difficult for us. But I still feel as though we're creating chances and that's the biggest thing.

If you're not creating chances then maybe there's an issue. But when I've been playing in the games, I've felt that we've still been having good chances to score and proper chances as well. Of course we were disappointed that we didn't take them, but if you look at the game before the derby we won 5-0 against Watford so it wasn't an issue then.

We're defending well and we feel as though we're creating those opportunities so it's just about being clinical in the final third and finishing those chances off.

THE 300 + CLUB

The 23-man squad of past and present Reds to have made 300 Premier League appearances: David James 572; Emile Heskey 516; James Milner 511*; Jamie Carragher 508; Steven Gerrard 504; Peter Crouch 467*; Brad Friedel 450; Danny Murphy 417; Stewart Downing 408; Robbie Fowler 379; Joe Cole 378; Nicolas Anelka 364; Glen Johnson 358; Kolo Toure 353; Robbie Keane 349; Paul Konchesky 347; Nick Barmby 343; Michael Owen 326; Gary McAllister 325; John Arne Riise 321; Sami Hyypia 318; Paul Ince 306; Jordan Henderson 304* (up to and including 31 March 2019).







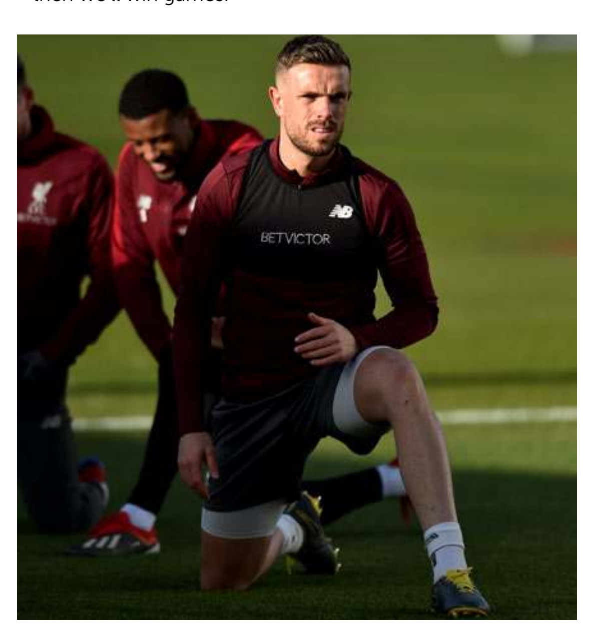
There has been talk about the advantages and disadvantages of playing before or after Manchester City – what changes for you in terms of playing first or second?
Nothing! I think it's the same for us. We've always said we'll take it game-by-game and it's about focusing on what we need to do performance-wise. If we perform to the levels that we know we can then more often than not we'll win games, so for us the concentration's only got to be on performance and what we need to do against the opposition.

We work hard on what we've got to do for each match and we know that if we do that and we execute it well then more often than not we'll win games.

Do you watch the other games?
It's difficult with the media as it is these days, blowing everything out of proportion a lot of the time with whether people win or lose, but it's just about concentrating on what we need to do as a team.

We've spoken about that in the group and that's all you can do really. When you look at City or Spurs, you expect them to win games. As I say, for us it's about performance and if we perform to the levels that we know we can do, then we'll win games.

YOU WILL ALWAYS GET PRESSURE WHEN YOU PLAY FOR LIVERPOOL BUT THAT'S GOOD – THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT AS A PLAYER AND THAT'S WHY YOU COME TO A CLUB LIKE THIS IN THE FIRST PLACE



You say you expect pressure at a club like Liverpool – do you feel the weight of expectation?
Of course there's an expectation with playing for Liverpool but that's why you want to play at the biggest clubs in the world and play in the big games and enjoy them.

That's what we enjoy as players. I'm sure when we can't play anymore, that's what we'll miss. So you've got to make the most of it and we want to give everything from now until the end of the season.

Again, when you go back to pressure, I think pressure to win one of the biggest titles in Europe has to be enjoyable. When you're fighting relegation and things like that, it's a different type of pressure. This is a much better kind of pressure for the team and one that we've got to enjoy.

For us, there's the club history. But at the end of the day we haven't won a trophy since 2012 when we won the League Cup, which is my only trophy since I've been here. So it's a long time since Liverpool has won a trophy and as players we want to be, as the manager has spoken about, the generation that starts it off again and gets a title over the line. That's what we're trying to do.

Hopefully that will happen this season, if not in the next couple of seasons. We're going to give everything to win as much as we can.

You made your 300th Premier League appearance in February, those games coming for first Sunderland then Liverpool...
I guess it's a decent milestone but to be honest it's not something I think too much about. It's probably something I'll consider more once I've finished playing and have more time to reflect on things. Hopefully there will be a few more games before then!

There's been a few good games and a few bad ones as well. It's strange because I never really remember the good ones but always the bad ones because they're the ones that hurt the most and the ones you want to use to put right.

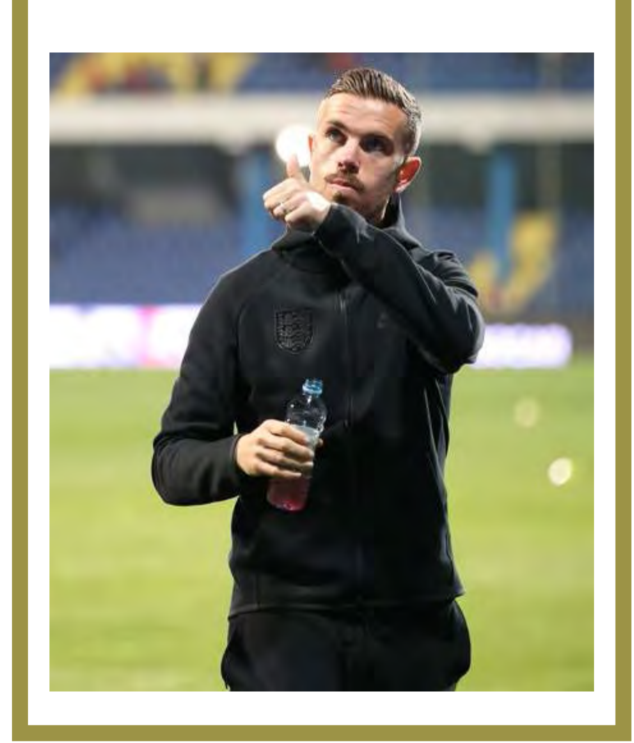
Hopefully when I'm finished I can remember the good ones and be able to look back properly.

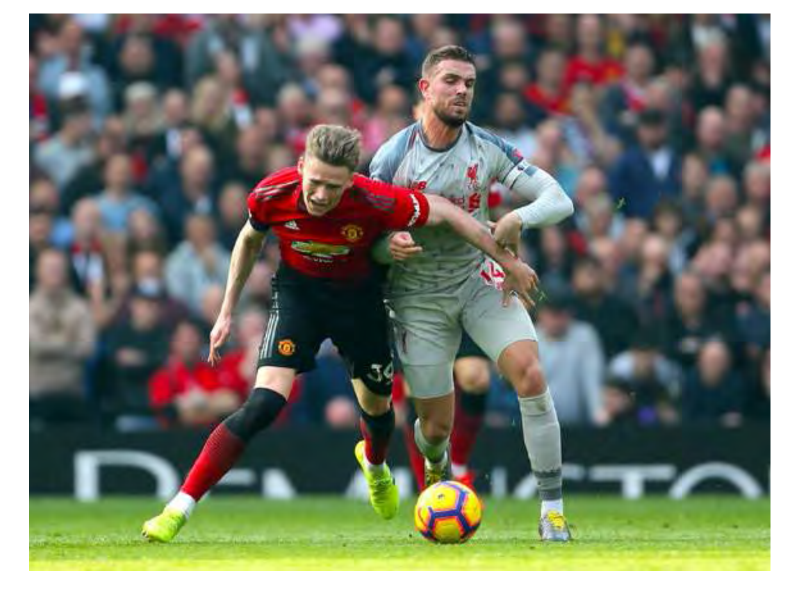
What has helped you sustain that longevity at the top level?
Having good people around me. My family, my friends, and the coaches that I had at Sunderland and the managers that I've played under whether that's been at Sunderland, here at Liverpool and England as well.

I feel as though I've always had good people around me and good managers to learn from who have cared about me. I think that has been a big thing, especially as football can change very quickly.

KLOPP ON HENDO'S 50 CAPS

"For a country with England's talent, resources and competition for places to get to such a number at his age tells you his qualities. Jordan is a special person and special player. He is our leader on and off the pitch and the example he sets to players of all ages is fantastic. It would not surprise me one bit if he goes on to become a centurion for England, given his determination to keep improving all the time."









NOTHING WILL COME EASY FOR US BUT WE’RE IN A POSITION NOW WHERE WE’RE JUST GOING TO GIVE EVERYTHING



What do you remember about your Premier League debut for Sunderland at Chelsea back in November 2008?
At half-time we were getting beaten 3-0 and the gaffer at the time, Roy Keane, said to me, "Go and get warmed up." I'm guessing he had a few words to say at half-time but I was out on the pitch warming-up. Roy then said, "Get ready, you're going on for the second-half" [in place of Steed Malbranque] and I was thinking: I'm going to change the game and we're going to come back and get a point or maybe win. We ended up losing five-nil so it wasn't great, but I still enjoyed just getting chucked on in a tough situation and I was still over the moon that I'd made my debut in the Premier League.

Ironically, your Liverpool debut came against Sunderland in August 2011...
Obviously my first game being against my old club was strange but I tried to just concentrate on the game. I can remember coming off and just feeling that it was strange. I can't really explain it much more than that, really. But since then I've kept on going and kept on improving and enjoying it and I'm on 300-plus Premier League games now!

You were in Liverpool's 2013/14 squad under Brendan Rodgers – how does that squad compare to the current one?
I don't like comparing teams, to be honest, but that season we finished second and this season we want to go on and finish first, so I'll tell you at the end of the season!

At the start of a season the aim is always to improve on last season – you must be pleased in that regard?
You always want to improve as a team. You always want to get better and better and I think we have improved since last season and we've got more points in the Premier League. But when you get into these situations, of course you want to go and win things – anybody would be lying if they told you that they didn't.

So for us as a team we're in a position now where we're just going to give everything until the end of the season and hopefully win as many games as we can. It's not easy. The Premier League is hard. Nothing will come easy for us, we know that, but we've just got to keep going and keep working.

I feel as though the future is exciting at this football club. When I look at the dressing-room, the manager, the fans and everyone surrounding the club, I feel its only a short time away for that trophy to arrive.



I FEEL AS THOUGH THE FUTURE IS EXCITING AT THIS FOOTBALL CLUB, THAT IT'S ONLY A SHORT TIME AWAY FOR THAT TROPHY TO ARRIVE



Pure football

"The way we played at home to Watford, we want to play like this every day and that's maybe sometimes possible and sometimes a bit less, but you have to be stable. The boys were always stable and really fluent offensively, so it's good – a very good example of how football should look. So, let's try to do it again and again."


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Official Insurance Partner
AXA and Liverpool FC have teamed up to form a new partnership, based on their shared values. So you can live your dreams not just on the field, but off it, too.
Courage to believe, passion to perform



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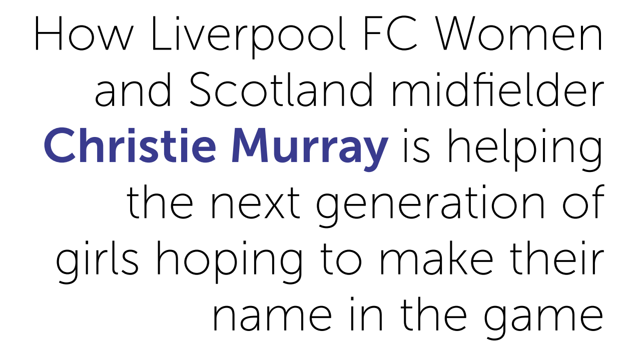
Onwards and upwards

"It looks like we are really on a good way and the only thing I can guarantee is that we constantly develop. Our little problem is many other clubs develop as well, so it's never that you improve 20 per cent and the others get 20 per cent weaker. They try to do the same, to reach the next level, and that's the challenge we face. It's interesting, but tough as well."


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COACHING CLASS



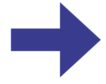
How Liverpool FC Women and Scotland midfielder **Christie Murray** is helping the next generation of girls hoping to make their name in the game

Interview: William Hughes

The growth in popularity of women's football was underlined last month when the Women's Super League announced a new multi-million pound sponsorship deal to kick-in next season.

Barclays' commitment to the future of the women's game is just the latest acknowledgment of a surge in interest over the past few years that is set to rise again this summer when the World Cup finals take place in France.

One player aiming to be part of the French footballing fiesta is Liverpool FC Women's midfielder Christie Murray. After helping





Scotland to qualify for their first ever World Cup finals, she will be looking to line-up for her nation when they kick-off their group games – ironically against England – in Nice on 9 June.

But when she isn't pulling on the blue of Scotland or red of Liverpool, she can often be spotted helping put something back into the game for the next generation of aspiring players.

For Christie has been coaching players at Liverpool FC Women's Academy set-up, helping run sessions for the Under-14s and Under-16s as part of the club's Regional Talent Club.

"I love football and I started coaching a few years ago, almost by accident," she explains. "I was playing with Glasgow City at the time and was out injured. Up until then I had been focused on my personal training [Christie is a certified personal trainer] but I wanted to stay involved and so I took my level one coaching badge with the Scottish FA, then my levels two and three.

"A few years later I was with the Scotland squad ahead of the European qualifiers and we were told there was an opportunity for



VICKY'S VIEW

LIVERPOOL FC WOMEN'S MANAGER VICKY JEPSON ON THE COACHING PATH

"Over the past couple of years we've had several senior players coaching in our youth section. Fara Williams has coached in there, Natasha Dowie, Lucy Staniforth and Casey Stoney. For me, it's great to have role models and England internationals such as them go and share their experiences of where they've been in the game, because the younger players all see the picture of the WSL and the World Cup and when you've got players who can share those experiences of how hard it is to actually get there and what it takes, it's so valuable for us.

"What Christie's done in there with the Under-16s and the Under-14s so far has been brilliant and hopefully when she's back from the World Cup she will continue that next season.

"I always want to see female coaches being involved in the game anyway because there are not many of us around, but when it's a player, it's fantastic. Last year Casey Stoney used to come and help me with my Development Squad while we helped her with her A-licence. We've encouraged a lot of our girls to take an FA level two course. Some of them have already got their level two and are looking to do their B-licence now and I'll always be there to support them on that coaching journey because I believe that if you're not playing you can still stay involved in the game and coach.

"Casey has done that and done a fantastic job this season at Manchester United so I think she's a good role model to use. But there's no reason why Christie Murray couldn't be coaching in years to come in the professional leagues or in the Scottish international set-up and I'll always encourage the girls to continue to get involved in coaching.

"We don't have many players who could be playing in the World Cup but Christie is obviously one that could be. The fact that our youth players have contact with her is great for them because they will feel like they know her and that they know her journey and I'm sure they will want to follow her and see how well her squad is doing and how she's doing in the games."

some of the Scottish Women's squad to do the UEFA 'B' coaching licence over the course of a year or so. A few of us put ourselves forward and I gained experience by spending a lot of hours coaching with boys and girls' teams before I did my final assessment."

Christie continued to coach when opportunities presented themselves and gained confidence with every session she put on.

"Sometimes I'd be out coaching a few nights a week and it was great to work in groups putting on drills," she says. "I felt as though I was and still am learning all the time."

Christie joined Liverpool last summer and started coaching at the Academy after a chance conversation with Zoe Johnson, technical manager of the Reds' Regional Talent Club.

"I heard that there might be opportunities to do some coaching and Zoe said, 'the thing is, you'd need your UEFA 'B' Licence.' I said that I had it and from then on I started helping out with the Under-16s and Under-14's (she has been assistant coach of the latter age group team).

"I love playing football and I love playing full-time but I still wanted to develop as a person. It's been a great experience for me because I've got to know the youth players and all the staff that work alongside them. I wanted to get hands-on coaching experience and it's gone on from there.

"I have been coaching two or three nights a week and it has been brilliant having the opportunity to work with some of the girls and see them develop.

"It's been good to coach in different situations and really put myself out of my comfort zone which is something that I've really enjoyed. The under 14s are a great group. They're so receptive and technically very good. I ask them questions and they answer well, to me that means they're engaged and want to be involved in the learning process which is great.

"What tips do I give them? I think generally just to enjoy playing. They are so young that you don't want to be overloading them with information. I just want to get them on the ball as much as possible and to be comfortable with it at their feet.

"For me, technique is massive.



SIX OF THE BEST

HALF-A-DOZEN TEENAGERS HAVE REPRESENTED LIVERPOOL FC WOMEN SO FAR THIS SEASON. HERE ARE THE TALENTED YOUNGSTERS WHO HAVE STEPPED UP WITH COACH VICKY JEPSON'S SQUAD...

NIAMH CHARLES

The forward made her debut as a 17-year-old and has established herself as an important member of the Reds' side. The Wirral-born player helped England to a bronze medal at the U20s World Cup earlier this season. Although restricted by injury this season, she hopes to be back for the run-in as the Reds host Bristol City on Sunday 21 April and visit St Andrew's to play Birmingham City on Sunday 28 April before signing-off with a Merseyside derby against Everton at Prenton Park on Saturday 11 May. Niamh recently signed a new deal with the Reds saying: "I've grown up here, I love this club and I support this club, so I'm delighted to sign again. Growing up, this was my dream and I'm really proud to have come through the Academy. Vicky has been here with me right the way through so it's really nice that it's culminated with us both being here with the first team."

AMY RODGERS

The defensive midfielder has been a regular in Jepson's squad this season. Another England youth international, she is combining her football with studying for a degree in psychology at the University of Liverpool. Amy, who turns 19 on 4 May, is enjoying the opportunity to train regularly. "Training full-time has helped my momentum and I just want to make as much of an impact as I can," she says.



SIMRAN JHAMAT

An England youth international who hails from the Midlands and was previously part of the youth programme at Aston Villa. She has been part of the set-up at the Liverpool FC Academy for a couple of years and has figured twice for the senior side this season.



"I think at that age it's also important for them to play freely. People love watching creative players and they love watching players who play with ease and technique and that's definitely something that I want to encourage."

Christie is coached by women with both club (manager Vicky Jepson and first-team coach Emma Humphries) and country (Shelley Kerr) and is happy to be adding her own voice on the coaching field.

"Hopefully it is a good experience for the girls in our younger teams to be able to have that contact with a current first-team player and see how we operate at FA WSL level," she says. "The fact that I'm still playing means they can use me as a reference by asking questions and advice on any areas they feel they need some help or guidance with because I've been in their shoes. Hopefully I can be a positive role model for them as well, that's the most important thing for me.

"We have had a few of the younger players come through and make their debuts for our senior team this season and myself and all the other girls always like to see that. It's great to see them get those opportunities."

With a big summer on the horizon, Christie has currently taken a step back from her coaching commitments as she shifts her full focus to her playing duties.

"Football is my passion and my UEFA A-licence is something I am hoping to work towards in the near future, although there is no rush at the moment.

"I have taken a break from coaching for a while now as my focus is on preparing myself as best as I can to make the squad for the World Cup. I want to give myself the best chance so, for the time being, my focus is on playing for Liverpool and working as hard as I can on the pitch. Next season I'd like to get back involved and work with the younger teams and their coaches again."

The gifted playmaker is only 28 but admits that a career in coaching may be a possible route for her to stay in the game once she eventually hangs up her boots.

"Coaching has just naturally fallen into my path which has been a surprise but I love it," she says. "I love football and the girls love football so I'm able to share my passion for that on the pitch.

"Of course things may change but at the moment I think it's a possibility as I have always loved the game and imagine I would like to stay involved."





LAUREN THOMAS

Teenager who has made the breakthrough into the Reds' senior side this season after impressing with the club's Development Squad. She has made five appearances off the bench so far, mainly operating in a wide position, and has pleased Jepson with the impact she has made while competing with more experienced players.



BO KEARNS

Midfielder who made her debut as a substitute against Chelsea last month after impressing with the club's youth and Academy sides Jepson said: "For a 17-year-old who has been at the club since she was eight, to come on and perform the way she did is a real positive. It was good to see her step up in that midfield, with the players she was up against, and actually make a difference."

ANNABEL BLANCHARD

Forward who became the latest – and youngest – player to represent the Reds this season when she came on as a substitute against Arsenal last month. She actually made her FA WSL debut last season and Jepson was delighted with her performance against the Gunners. "She is another one that I've known since she was eight, so it was great to give her an opportunity and it's deserved," says Vicky. "She may have got her opportunity due to injuries in our squad but at the end of the day when a youth player gets an opportunity, you've got to make sure you make the most of it, and I thought Annabel did that."







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Embracing the challenge

"To be a Liverpool player you need special qualities as a person, as well as the ability – they have this! They must embrace the expectation and eagerness for success, even though it exists in the most competitive environment in world sport – and again they do it! This is why we have a chance."

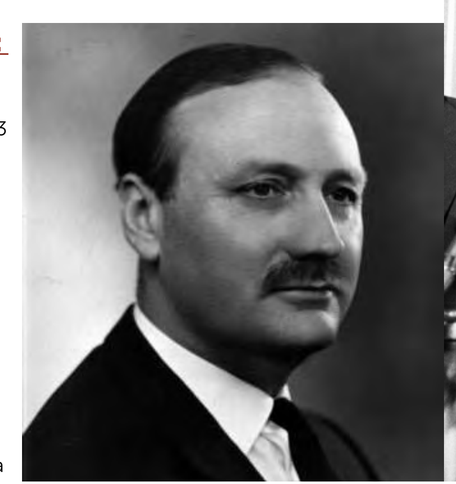
THE ONE SHOW

Saluting nine individuals who dedicated their careers solely to the Liverpool FC cause on the pitch or off it – and sometimes both

People come and go at Anfield, new signings and departures are a key part of football. But there's a small list of players, managers, coaches and admin staff who dedicate their whole working life to one club: Liverpool Football Club. Here are nine of the best...

Words: Peter Kenny Jones


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JOHN SMITH: RED KNIGHT

Sir John was the chairman from 1973 until 1990. His 17-year stint covered eleven league titles and four European Cups, among other trophies, in an unparalleled period of success.

Smith arrived at Anfield in 1971 and worked alongside Peter Robinson as a director. A staunch defender of the Boot Room philosophy, his tactics in running the club were a huge factor in success on the pitch. He worked tirelessly to ensure the highest standards were maintained and was a firm believer in promoting from within, appointing first Bob Paisley then Joe Fagan then Kenny Dalglish as manager.

He also brokered a groundbreaking shirt sponsorship deal with Hitachi in 1979 and worked to safeguard the club's reputation after Heysel and Hillsborough.

"We're a very, very modest club," he once said. "We don't talk. We don't boast."



PETER ROBINSON: QUIETLY EFFECTIVE

Pivotal behind the scenes during the club's best years – ensuring everything ran smoothly – Robinson was secretary from 1965-92 and chief executive from 1992-2000.

His footballing and secretarial schooling was spent at Crewe Alexandra, Stockport County, Scunthorpe United and Brighton and Hove Albion before he landed the Liverpool job in 1965.

Peter dealt with all administrative matters, going about his business with the minimum of fuss.

An active champion of the 'Liverpool Way', he was never one to court publicity ensuring that any potential controversies were swiftly dealt with behind-closed-doors.

During three-and-a-half decades with LFC he worked alongside a succession of managers and performed a vital role in their quest for success. It was also Robinson's decision to open the gates at Anfield for the floral tributes following Hillsborough, displaying the deep connection and understanding he had with the fans.

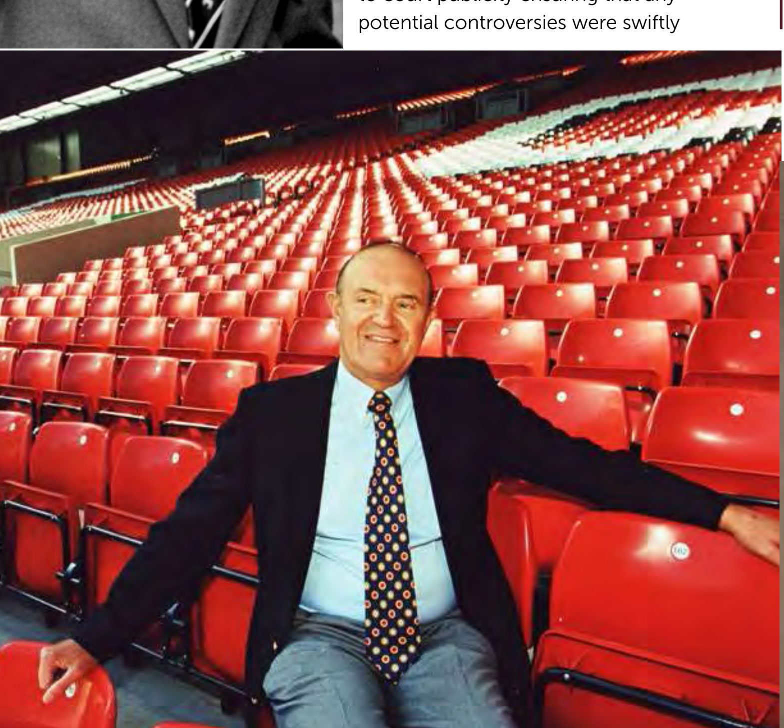
JOHN MCKENNA: HONEST TO GOODNESS

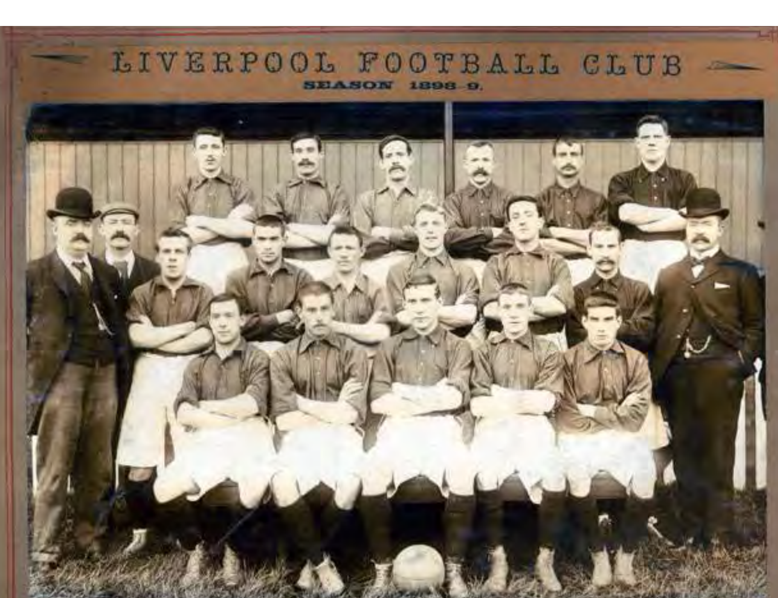
John McKenna was never given the official title of manager but handled many managerial duties. He took control of Liverpool under the title of chairman from 1909 to 1914 and 1917 to 1919. He was also president of the Football League for a long spell and vice-president of the FA.

His role at LFC included signing players and he was the man who took Liverpool into the Football League. As well as managing the team himself, he also oversaw the appointment of William Edward Barclay and Tom Watson.

The capture of Watson from Sunderland, the best team in England at the time, was a coup. He'd won the league three times with the Wearsiders and went on to take Liverpool into the First Division, winning the title twice.

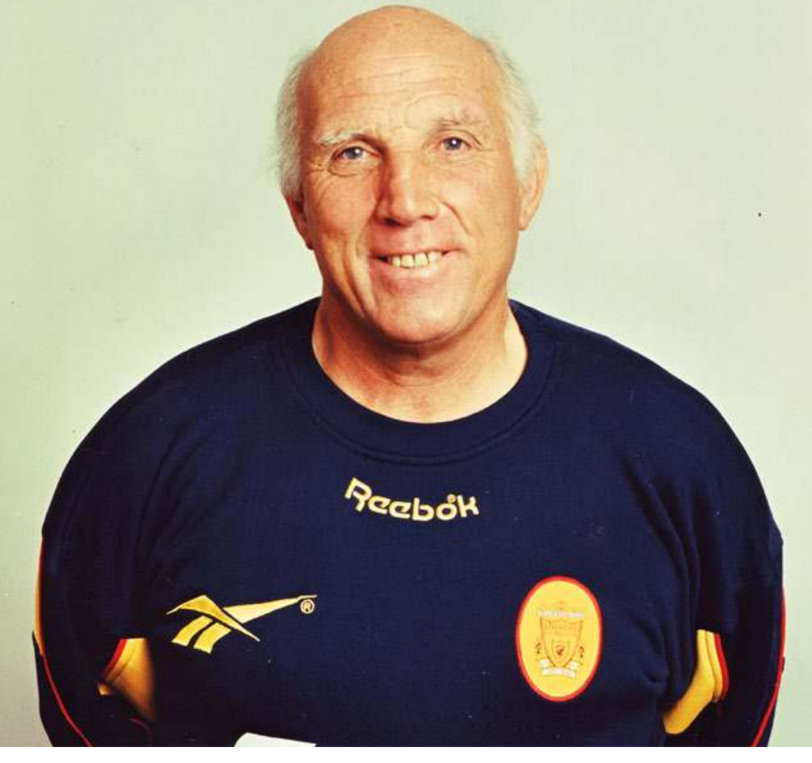
McKenna was known as 'Honest John' and was hugely influential throughout British football during his working life.






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RONNIE MORAN: BORN AND RED

It's two years now since we lost Ronnie, but his memory lives on in every LFC heart. Bugsy, as he was affectionately known, was involved in over 2,000 games during a career in which he held almost every role for the club.

The sergeant-major of the dressing-room kept all the players on their toes and would hand out league winner's medals from a cardboard box, telling the players to be ready for pre-season, always pushing for repeated success. He wasn't there to be particularly liked – he was there to help Liverpool win.

Moran's playing career began after a postman alerted Liverpool to his ability. Ultra-reliable, he missed only six games out of 210 across five seasons and won the old Second Division (1961/62) then the First Division (63/64) with Bill Shankly's Reds.

Having hung up his boots and graduating to training duties, he was appointed as caretaker-manager following Kenny Dalglish's resignation in 1991, holding the fort until the appointment of Graeme Souness.

Just before Ronnie died, a book about him was published in collaboration with his son, chronicling 49 years of service to LFC. Its title: *Mr Liverpool*.

BOB PAISLEY: OUR BOB

Prior to his phenomenal success as Reds manager – 19 major trophies – Bob spent 15 years as a player and was often the man winning the ball back and passing to Billy Liddell to terrorise the opposition.

Upon hanging up his playing boots in 1954 he joined the backroom staff and, following a lengthy stint as Bill Shankly's right-hand man (1959-74) he was a reluctant successor to the top job.

Bob was a man of few words, shy in public and close to just a few in the media, but as a manager he was wonderfully canny and astute, for example converting Shankly's final signing Ray Kennedy from a striker to a lethally effective midfielder.

Paisley's Reds won the European Cup in 1977, 1978, and 1981 – along with Zinedine Zidane at Real Madrid he's still the only boss to claim the trophy three times with the same club – and he also led Liverpool to six of their 18 top-flight titles plus three League Cup triumphs and the UEFA Cup in 1976.

Bob passed away on 14 February 1996, aged 77, survived by his wife Jessie (who died in 2012), two sons and a daughter. He is remembered in the hearts of Liverpool fans everywhere, celebrated with a flag on the Kop, and honoured by bronze plaques on piers either side of the the eponymous Gateway showing a sculpture of Bob in relief and a roll-call of his honours.

Truly a Liverpool FC legend, the 100th anniversary of his birth was commemorated earlier this season.





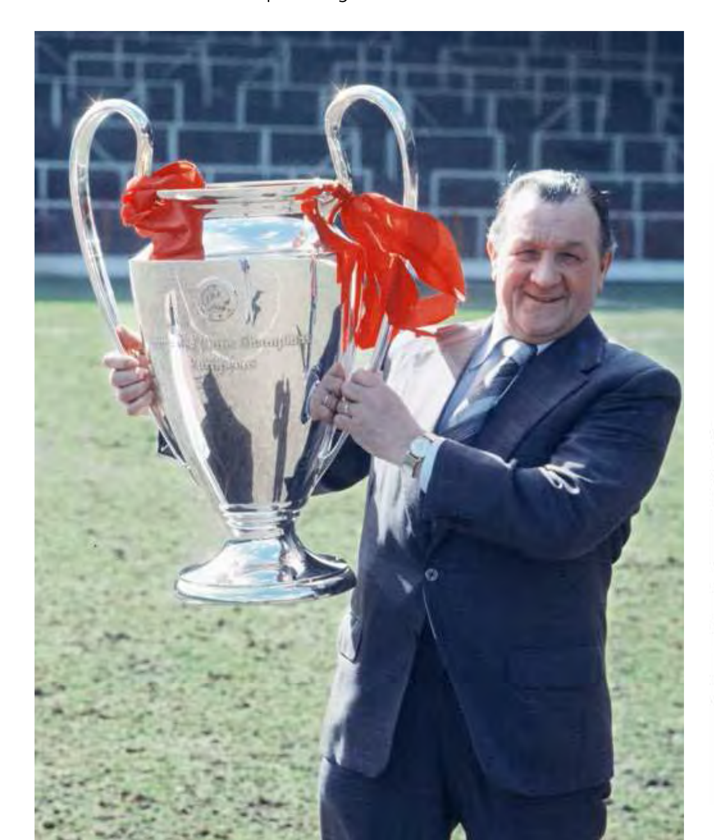
GERRY BYRNE: WARRIOR

Byrne and his broken collarbone are synonymous with the famous first FA Cup victory in 1965, which of course displayed his immense fighting spirit.

The man given the nickname 'Crunch' was hard and fair, booked just once in his entire Liverpool career. Shankly said Gerry was the toughest player he'd ever known but not only because he played most of that final with such an agonising injury – he also dislocated his elbow the following season against Celtic in the European Cup Winner's Cup semi-final but played on through the pain again – and then played the next fixture against Stoke just two days later.

When Shanks arrived at Anfield, the full-back was on the transfer-list but the new boss made him a crucial member of his team. Byrne took Ronnie Moran's place in the Liverpool side and was a stalwart during 16 years with the club.

In 1970 he was rewarded with a testimonial on a dark and rainy Liverpool day. Byrne feared no one would turn up but couldn't have been more wrong as 42,000 were treated to a pulsating 8-8 draw with an all-star XI.





DONALD MACKINLAY: CAPTAIN MATERIAL

Donald spent 16 seasons with Liverpool, six of which saw the Scot captain the side. The highlight of his career was the back-to-back championships in the early 1920s when Liverpool were dubbed 'The Untouchables'.

Former manager Tom Watson had set out to rebuild his defence by signing full backs Mackinlay and Ephraim Longworth, half-back Walter Wadsworth and goalkeeper Elisha Scott. Three of them went on to skipper the side which illustrates the impact the defence had upon the double title-winning side.

Mackinlay had also appeared in Liverpool's first FA Cup final in 1914 against Burnley. The semi-final was against much-fancied Aston Villa and some previews in the press even stated that the game was over before it began, that there was no need to study form.

Watson pinned the report to the wall and gave a rousing speech to his players before the game. Mackinlay starred as the Reds shocked Villa in front of over 70,000 spectators at White Hart Lane.



BILLY LIDDELL: OUR NEON SIGN

When Billy played his last game for Liverpool in 1960 it was 22 years after he'd signed for them. The occasion was marked with a souvenir edition of the *Liverpool Echo* in which he was hailed as "a player, a gentleman, a sportsman and the finest club-man the game ever knew."

Anfield's first superstar joined Liverpool in 1938 aged 17 from Lochgelly Violet, a team from a Fifeshire mining town whose name translates from the Gaelic as 'shining waters'. In 1946/47 he helped Liverpool to the First Division title, and also played in the 1950 FA Cup final against Arsenal.

"I was fortunate to play when Billy was at his peak," said forward Albert Stubbins. "He was the most generous winger I ever played with – fast, two footed and brave. He never shirked a tackle but never once did I see him commit a foul."

It's a measure of Liddell's greatness that he and Stanley Matthews were the only players to appear in both Great Britain sides that took on Rest of the World select XIs in 1947 and 1955.

He retired in 1961, having spent his entire professional career at Anfield, and died in 2001. "He was everything that everyone said he was," says Ian Callaghan, who ultimately replaced Billy on the wing. "So strong on the ball with a hammer of a shot in both feet. His name is a neon sign on Merseyside."

He's still fourth in LFC's all-time scoring charts with 228 goals.

JAMIE CARRAGHER: KOP CONVERT

The Bootle-born Evertonian originally arrived at LFC as a striker. Brought up on Marsh Lane, his dad ran the Salisbury pub, now opposite Jamie's youth and community centre, and was also his first manager in a promising youth career which included a cup final at Goodison when he was then playing for Bootle Boys.

Carra's affinity with the other Merseyside team was so strong that he'd even train in an Everton kit. However, as his prospects of forging a career at Anfield grew, his blue heart turned red. He began to drop deeper on the pitch and was predominately used as a midfielder until a bout of injuries and suspensions before the 1996 FA Youth Cup final led to Ronnie Moran suggesting a place in the heart of the defence.

Steve Heighway and Hughie MacAuley heeded the advice, Liverpool won and Carragher's centre-back career began. His full first-team debut in 1997 yielded a goal against Aston Villa, one of only five in over 700 games.

A loyal and dependable servant, the images of Carra from Istanbul are unforgettable.





Fully focused

"The players' ability to park all the thoughts of what's ahead and focus entirely on the moment has brought us to this point. I think in sport is it known as 'tunnel vision' – that ability to block out everything else around you. So far we have demonstrated we have this quality and now we must continue with it."



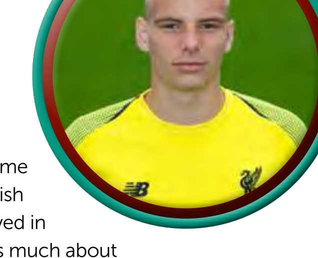
MEET MY TEAM-MATES

Liverpool Under-18s will play Man City Under-18s in the FA Youth Cup Final at the Etihad Stadium so ahead of the mouth-watering clash we asked centre-back **Tom Clayton**, who will soon return to action having undergone ankle surgery in January, to give us the lowdown on the class of 2019...

Words: Chris McLoughlin



GOALKEEPER



VITEZSLAV JAROS

He's a good keeper and I don't think he gets the credit he deserves. Vitezslav comes up with big saves at big moments and it doesn't always get recognised. He's a quiet lad, but he'll give a bit of stick out and take some back in the changing rooms. His English has really come on and he gets involved in the banter, although he doesn't tell us much about the Czech Republic so I'm a bit sceptical about why that is!

DEFENDERS



JACK WALLS

It's a credit to Jack that he's come back from suffering two broken legs. It shows how mentally strong he is and he's one of the few Scousers we've got in the team. That shows because he loves a tackle and likes to think he's a bit of a hard-knock. He got hit in the face in a game against Wigan but it took him a minute to realise. He's a Scouser born and bred, but he was brought up an Evertonian!


Jack Walls in action

NECO WILLIAMS

Neco loves being a Welshman. When he first joined he was a quiet lad but now we can't shut him up. Honestly, he just doesn't shut up and because he's not the brightest some of the comments he comes out with get the lads going. We sometimes have a bit of a quiz between him and Abdi Sharif. Some of the answers they come up with you wouldn't believe. Neco is mentally strong though, he had to be to get over a serious back injury last year.

RHYS WILLIAMS



Rhys is huge, although he's changed his hairstyle recently. He's a great lad, one of the loudest voices in the changing room personality wise. He loves the banter and throws it about everywhere. He's got a good music taste too – a nice variety – so he's probably the DJ in the changing room. He mixes it up and recently he's grown into one of the leaders in the team. You can see and hear that on the pitch and he and Morgan Boyes are the two biggest jokers in the squad. When they're on form together you don't want to be near them.

REMI SAVAGE

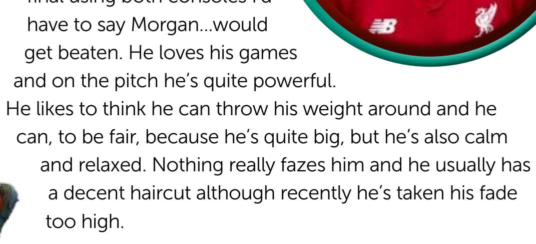


Remi is quite quiet and a bit dozy at times, but he knows he's a bit dozy! Him and Niall Brookwell have a bit of a bromance going on. They're always up to something and it's never any good! He can play at left-back and centre-back and he's a good lad, but a bit of a joker and a comedian away from the pitch. He likes a game of FIFA too, but he's not very good at it.



MORGAN BOYES

Morgan is good at FIFA. Him and Elijah Dixon-Bonner are the FIFA kings of the group. One of them has got an Xbox, the other a PlayStation so it's hard to say who is the best but if they had a two-legged final using both consoles I'd have to say Morgan...would get beaten. He loves his games and on the pitch he's quite powerful. He likes to think he can throw his weight around and he can, to be fair, because he's quite big, but he's also calm and relaxed. Nothing really fazes him and he usually has a decent haircut although recently he's taken his fade too high.





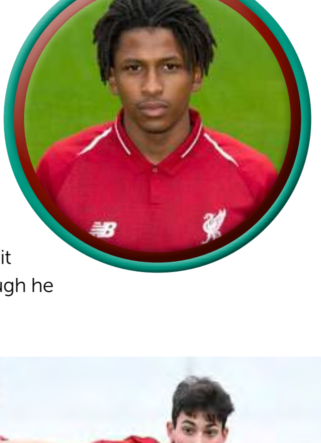
TOM CLAYTON



Great lad, got real quality! I've been here about 10 years and have come through all the ranks, playing alongside Rhys Williams ever since we got here. We've got a nice relationship at the back. I've grown up with Paul Glatzel, Abdi Sharif and the likes of Jake Cain and Leighton Clarkson – I'm quite friendly with all the lads. I'm from St Helens and I do like my rugby league. Our manager Barry Lewtas said I get giddy when we play at Saints, but I'm not having that!

MIDFIELDERS

YASSER LAROUCI



He is one of the quickest players I've seen. When he gets 20 yards in front of him to run into nobody is catching him, but he's powerful over the first couple of yards too. Yasser is from Algeria and his English has come on loads recently. He's just starting to get involved in the banter a bit more and Algerian banter is better than I thought it would be. He's a good character although he thinks he's a bit of a gangsta!



MATTEO RITACCIO

One of the most professional lads here, he's always in the gym early doing extra stuff. He eats well, he's always in the ice bath...but on the pitch he likes a good tackle and breaks up play well. I had no idea Matteo was Italian until a couple of months back. He was born in New York and he's definitely American to me. He loves New York and can never wait to go home although he never goes on about American sports. He just loves his soccer, as he calls it, so how can he be Italian?

ABDI SHARIF



Abdi is one of the fittest players here. He can run for days, he just needs to use it more running forward and getting from box-to-box. He's a good lad although his hygiene is a bit debatable! He won't thank me for saying it, but it's true! Abdi is a bubbly character and is always doing his hair. He loves his haircut and thinks it is the best haircut ever, but it's not. Put it this way, if one of the lads had to cut my hair he'd be last on the list and I'd rather not share a room with him either because he sleeps with his eyes open.



JAKE CAIN

He's a football fanatic. He knows everything about football from Premier League to League Two. If you ask him about any game he'll know the score, he's a statto. On the pitch he's technically gifted and has got a wand of a left foot, but I'm not sure about his taste in music. When I've been in the car with him he likes to get depressing songs on, which isn't for everyone. He'll be like: 'I'm just putting a few depressing songs on' and I'll be saying 'Jake, we've just finished training!' Maybe it's because he's from Wigan, they're a special breed are Wiganers.



EDVARD TAGSETH

Edvard is always telling us hardly anyone lives in his town, but he loves Norway. His English was pretty much perfect when he came in and he fitted in straight away, we wouldn't know he was from Norway if he didn't keep telling us. He's not had the best of luck with injury in the last 18 months but he got to the Euros with Norway recently so fair play to him. He's always up to something, he can never sit still and if there's a fitness test it's always him and Abdi leading the way.

ELIJAH DIXON-BONNER

Elijah loves his music, even if they're not my type of tunes. He's into rap and all the London stuff because he's a London lad and loves all his designer clothes and outfits too. Some of his clothes are good, some of them are very debatable! He's a quality player, got a great right foot and can play anywhere in midfield – six, eight or 10. Elijah has got the attributes for all of those positions and is still trying to find out which is his best.

LEIGHTON CLARKSON

A bit like Jake Cain, Leighton is technically excellent and does his job in front of the back four really well. He breaks things up and can switch the play with both feet. He's from Blackburn and along with Rhys, who is from Preston, plus Jake and Niall who are from Wigan, they're the Lancashire crew and they like to have some banter with the Scousers. Surprisingly they're not into cricket, but they like their pies. At least Leighton knows his music, he likes upbeat, lively tunes like myself.



LUIS LONGSTAFF

Luis is a good lad but I'm very sceptical about some of his decisions in life! On the pitch he is brilliant in one-v-one situations and no-one wants to come up against him in training. He's powerful, got two good feet and he can score goals. He's from the North-East but he loves Liverpool. He says Liverpool is his home now so he just needs a Scouse accent instead of a Geordie one plus some decent clothes. His dress sense – and a lot of the lads will agree with me – is shocking. Who is the worst dresser isn't even a question here. It's Luis.





FORWARDS



PAUL GLATZEL

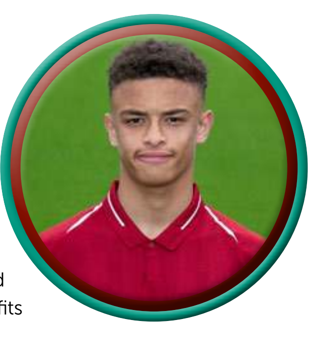
The players' player. If you spoke to anyone here at the Academy no-one would have a bad word to say about him, players, coaches or staff. He's a lovely lad, an all-round top guy and a captain who leads by example. His goalscoring record speaks for itself and I wouldn't put scoring a hat-trick in the Youth Cup final past him. All the coaches think Paul is quite innocent, but trust me – in the changing room he's a different person! If I had to share a room with a team-mate or get one of the lads to pick my clothes for me I'd always play it safe and pick Paul. He'd make me look smart and he'd keep a room clean tidy and ensure we got some peace and quiet.

BOBBY DUNCAN

Bobby is never off his phone. Honestly, it's hard trying to get a conversation out of him. When he is off his phone he's a good lad, a lively character who loves the banter and playing his former club Man City in the Youth Cup final gives him an added incentive, not that any of use need one. He's a natural finisher, especially on his left foot, and although neither of them will admit it I reckon deep down there's a little competition between him and Paul to see who gets the most goals.



FIDEL O'ROURKE

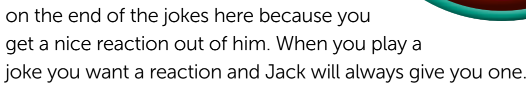


Any striker in the same squad as Bobby and Paul is going to find it hard to get a game so I think Fidel is unlucky not to have played more. When he has come on he's made a massive impact and when he does play he gets the captain's armband, which shows how highly Barry thinks of him. He's a nice lad who gets on well with everyone and he fits into the team really well.



JACK BEARNE

A bit like Abdi, his hygiene can be debated on! Joking aside, Jack is a good lad who came in from Nottingham and I think it took him a bit of time to settle in. We're seeing the benefits of that now and he's scored two winning goals against Everton this season, but Jack is always on the end of the jokes here because you get a nice reaction out of him. When you play a joke you want a reaction and Jack will always give you one.





With compliments

"I am running out of compliments for my players for how they are approaching the task in front of them. What impresses me most is how they are doing it with so little fuss. Their life is big match after big match. Their ability to focus and go again has so far been absolutely outstanding."

Getting to Anfield

Public transport: the quick and convenient way to the match

Get the bus

On matchday the 917 express bus runs direct from Liverpool city centre to Anfield every 10 minutes. There is a discounted ticket price of £4, with fans receiving a discount on soft drinks at LFC kiosks within the stadium on presentation of their return-ticket.

The Soccerbus will be operating three hours prior to kick-off and up to 90 minutes after the final whistle. A new family ticket (two adults + two children) is available for £7 and a group ticket (four adults) for £10. Soccerbus tickets can now be bought at any rail station by asking for a 'plus Anfield/Goodison' ticket.

Other bus services include the 26 and 27 from LiverpoolONE station and 17 from Queen Square. The 68/168, which operates between Bootle and Aigburth, and the 14 and 19 (from Queen Square) stop a short walk from the ground.

The 501 football service operates direct to Lime Street from Walton Lane for up to two hours after the final whistle. Adult £2, children £1.

The 502 also runs two journeys from Anfield after each home game to Lime Street.



Trains and automobiles

Lime Street is two miles from Anfield and taxi fares usually cost £7-9, or buses go from nearby Queen Square. Merseyrail runs from town to Sandhills station from where matchday passengers can use the Soccerbus.

Back of the cab

Taxi pick-up points are available outside of the stadium and on major routes. Taxi One operates a taxi-bus service from St Johns Lane, Liverpool city centre, direct to Anfield. A frequent service operates from three hours prior to kick off. Taxi One return-service operates from the corner of Anfield Road/Sleepers Hill opposite the Isla Gladstone conservatory back to the city-centre.

On your bike!

The free LFC Cycle Hub will be located on Anfield Road for the 2018/19 season, allowing fans who cycle to the game to park their bikes safely and securely with an attendant.

Walk on

Walking routes are signposted from Lime Street, Sandhills and Kirkdale stations to assist fans who travel to the game using local rail services.

Get there early!

Avoid the crowds and get to Anfield early to enjoy the Fan Zones, located in Paisley Square and Anfield Road and open four hours before kick-off – ideal for meeting before the game to soak up the atmosphere.

For more advice please visit www.liverpoolfc.com/gettingtoanfield

ANFIELD MATCHDAY TRANSPORT PLAN 2018/19 SEASON





EX-REDS ON A WING AND A PRAYER!

Bishops take on Red Neighbours' walking-football team while famous trophy has a Royal appointment

A team of bishops from across the North West have been in Liverpool for a special match against a Red Neighbours walking-football team featuring LFC legends Ian Callaghan and Roy Evans.

Led by LFC club chaplain and Red Neighbours team-member Bill Bygroves, the morning consisted of a high-tempo warm-up with stretching followed by a series of dribbling drills and competitive games.

"It's been a while since I've played football, but I've really enjoyed it today," said ex-Reds boss Roy. "It's great to see so many people here – you can see how much these sessions mean to the local men who come each week."

After the final whistle the teams headed inside for a cup of tea, a slice of cake and a catch-up – and there was a chance for the clergymen to have their photo taken with the prestigious Champions League trophy.

The bishop of Sherwood, Tony Porter, said: "What a great experience. The Red Neighbours team have made us feel extremely welcome and we've enjoyed a great game of football. A massive thanks to Red Neighbours for organising the event and getting everyone together."

Walking-football supports two key areas of Red Neighbours' focus: support for the elderly community and encouraging a physically-active community. Sessions are held at Anfield Sports & Community Centre every Tuesday afternoon and Friday morning.

Roy Evans (above) rolls back the years in the walking-football tourmanent



Meanwhile Red Neighbours and a group of LFC employee volunteers visited the Royal Liverpool Hospital with the Champions League trophy, aiming to lift spirits with a few sing-alongs. Club chaplain Bill Bygroves said: "Seeing the smiles on the patients' faces is what it's all about."

"EXCITED AND HONOURED"

Matt Parish, the new director of LFC Foundation, on how the club's official charity can keep making special things happen



Matt, welcome to Liverpool FC – what have the first few weeks been like?
A bit of a whirlwind, with lots of places to visit and plenty of people to meet, and it's been incredibly impressive. As well as the stadium there is Anfield Sports & Community Centre, where LFC Foundation is based, and the club's offices in the city-centre.

If I didn't know before how big this football club is, I do now. Already I've begun to see what it means to people and what a difference it can help to make to the lives of our children and youngsters.

Can you tell us a bit about your background, and your appointment as the new director of LFC Foundation?
I'd previously worked with Burnley FC in the Community [as director of education and inclusion] and before that Charlton Athletic Community Trust [chief operating officer].

I'm originally from Lewisham in South London and – whisper it – a West Ham fan! But I have family connections on Merseyside through my wife so I already knew the area quite well, and when this opportunity came along I was delighted to come onboard.

If there's one message you'd like to get across, what would it be?
That we'd love people to get involved! At the recent Legends match with Milan Glorie the LFC Foundation team was on-hand in and around the stadium to explain more about what we do: the programmes and partnerships we deliver to enable children with additional needs to take part in fun and inclusive sports activities, and to encourage young people to feel positive about themselves and their community through life-changing opportunities in further education and employability.

It's very much a two-way process. It's vital that we listen to our supporters as we strive to deliver success off the pitch as much as on it.

Looking ahead, what can we expect from LFC Foundation in the future?
First and foremost I'm excited and honoured to be part of this team now, to be able to lead LFC Foundation and build on the excellent work that is already happening with our projects and key partners.

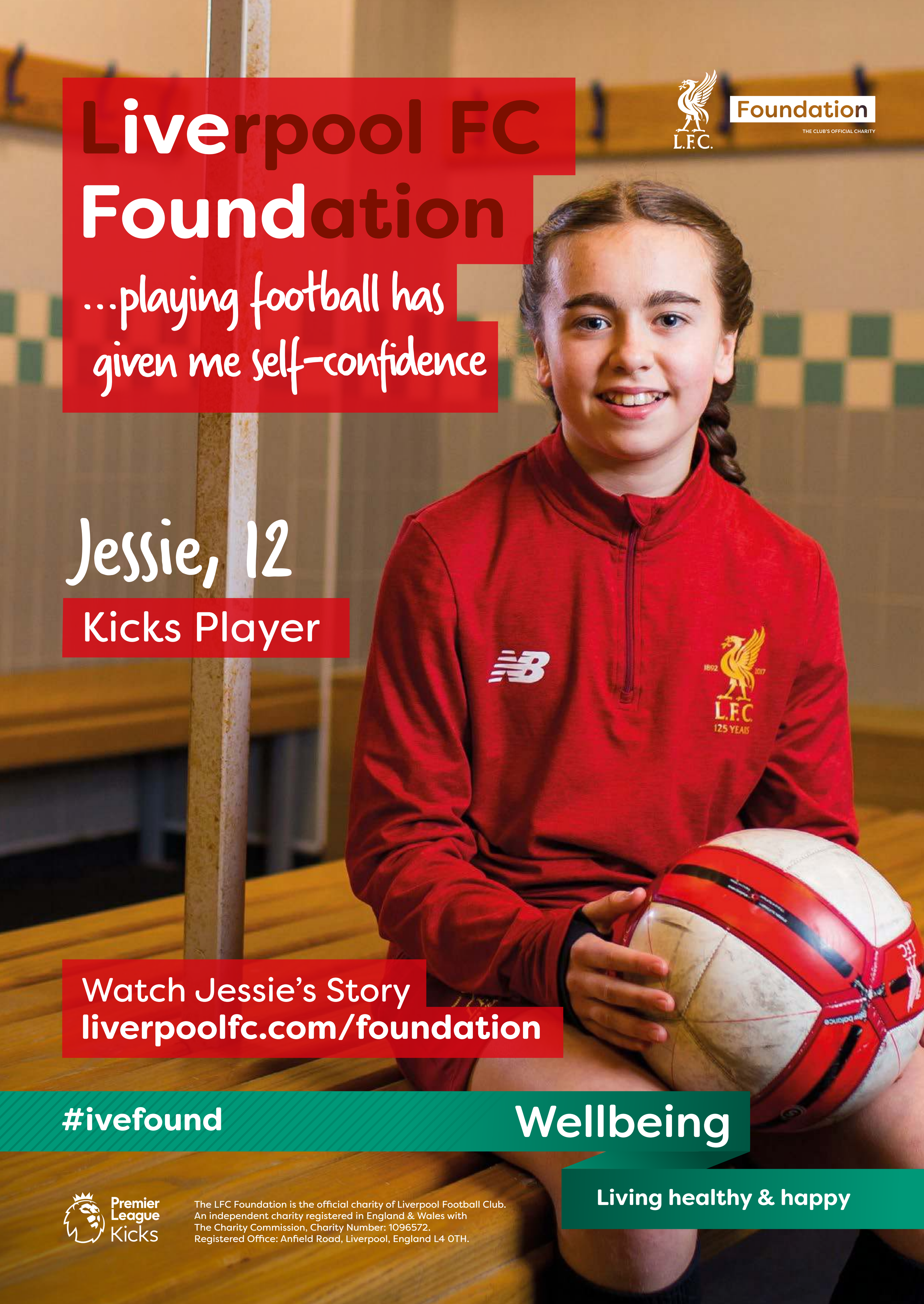
We're in great shape, doing fantastic work with local children, and we want to build on it – to help more young people in the Liverpool City region and beyond.

To coin a phrase which I really believe in, it's about creating 'equality of opportunity'.

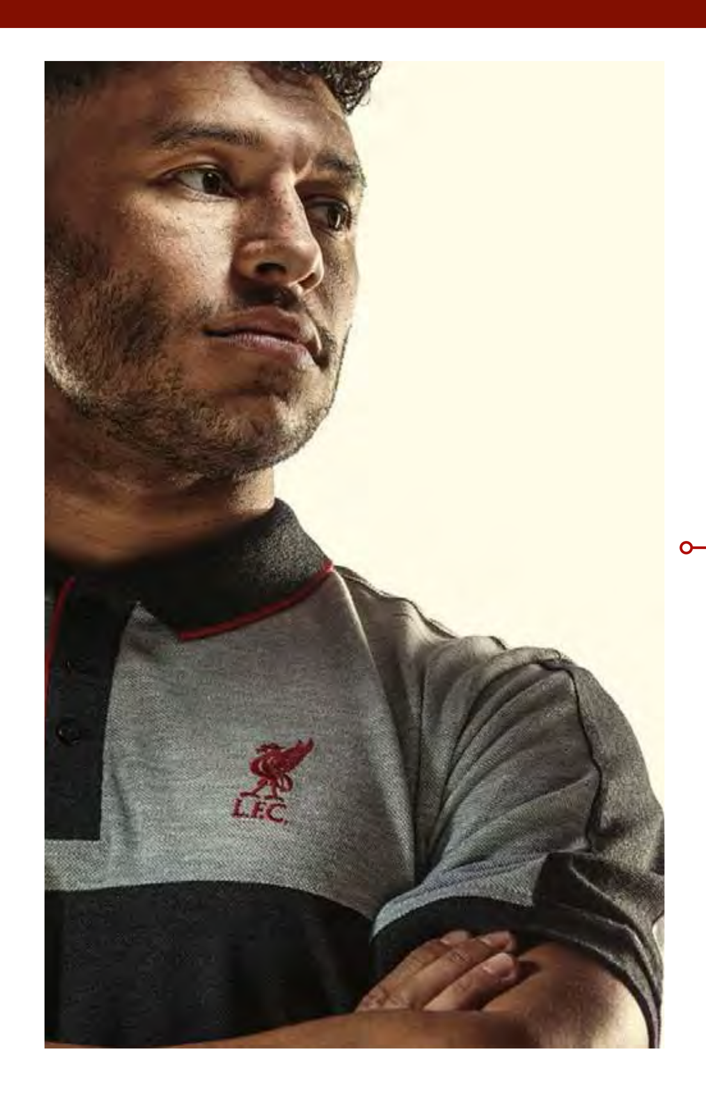
In other words, it shouldn't matter where you grow up in this city – you should be entitled to the same opportunities and life-chances. That's our goal.






Liverpool FC Foundation
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Kicks Player
Watch Jessie's Story
liverpoolfc.com/foundation
#ivefound
Wellbeing
Living healthy & happy
L.F.C.
Foundation
THE CLUB'S OFFICIAL CHARITY
Premier League Kicks
The LFC Foundation is the official charity of Liverpool Football Club.
An independent charity registered in England & Wales with
The Charity Commission, Charity Number: 1096572.
Registered Office: Anfield Road, Liverpool, England L4 0TH.

WHAT'S IN

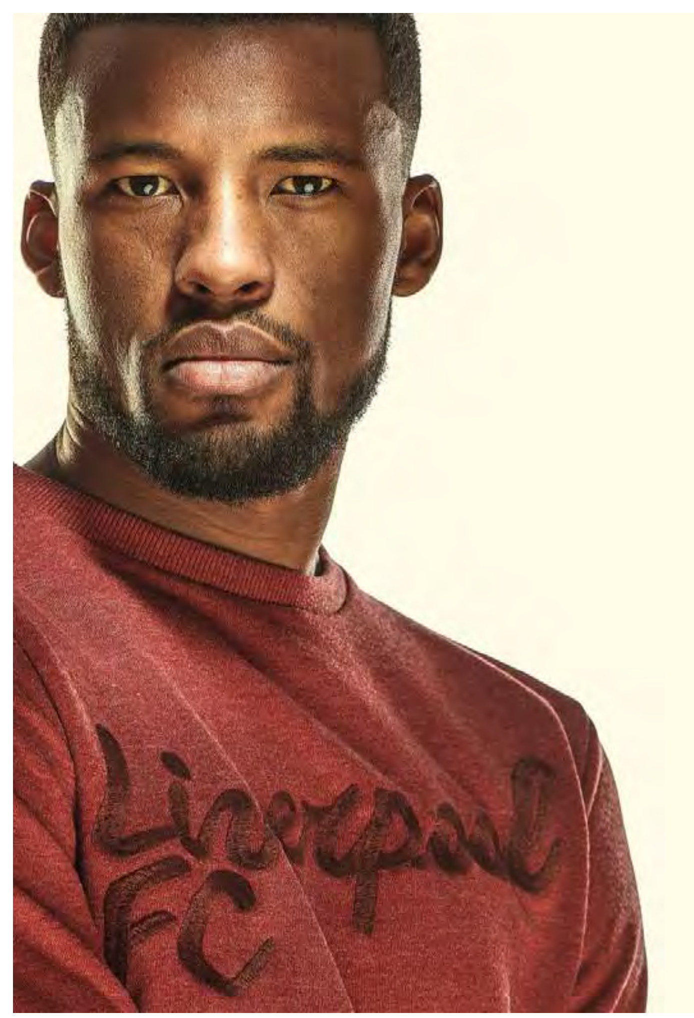




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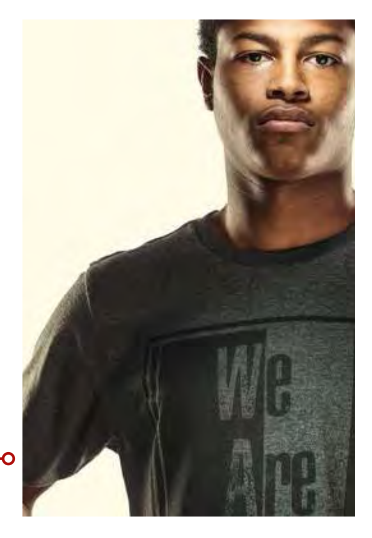


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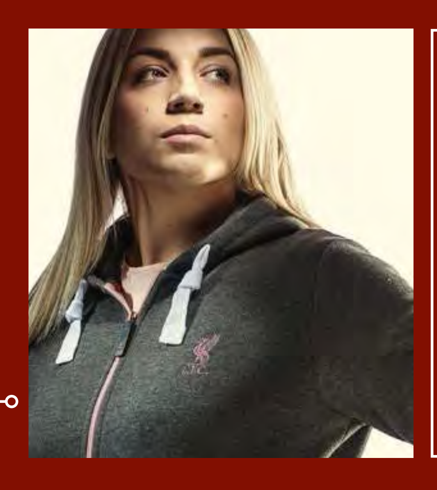


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What's On

APR/MAY





HILLSBOROUGH: THIRTY YEARS ON

Saturday 15 April 2018 marks the 30th anniversary of the Hillsborough tragedy. Liverpool supporters around the world will remember those fellow fans who went to a football match and never came home.

The city will come to a standstill for a minute's silence at 3.06pm. Tunnels will be closed, buses will be stopped and ferries will sound their horns.

Margaret Aspinall, chair of the Hillsborough Family Support Group, says: "As everybody knows, the past two years we've been alternating between the two cathedrals, but on the 30th anniversary we've got to have a private service in a room at Anfield – not on the Kop – and it will be families only.

"People may wonder why is that, because obviously we would have liked all supporters and fans to be there and to be open for everybody. But unfortunately we can't do that at this moment in time because of the proceedings going on in Preston. We have to be extra careful and vigilant to make sure we don't make it too big. So that's why we decided to just have families only.

"We can't thank the supporters enough, not just them but the city as a whole. On 15 April it's obviously very important, in the 30th year, [to remember] the deaths of the 96 and so many people who were injured. But under circumstances that are no fault of our own, we have to be very, very careful.

"But I'd like to thank all the supporters for what they have done over the years, in supporting the families, and especially the survivors, who are still suffering to this day. I'd just like to thank them all on behalf of all of us and [to say] please, please do not say anything that can prejudice any trial that is going ahead."

APR/MAY

What's On

THAT FRIDAY FEELING

April will be dominated by Friday football with the first-team starting the month by travelling to Southampton on the 5th and ending it by hosting Huddersfield on the 26th.

In-between-times Jürgen Klopp's men host Chelsea on Sunday 14th and visit Cardiff on Sunday 21st as they look to stay in the Premier League title race. Either side of the Chelsea game is the small matter of the Champions League quarter-final against FC Porto with a semi-final against Barcelona or Manchester United starting on 30 April/1 May the prize for the winners.

Another Friday fixture of special significance will be held at the Aviva Stadium in Dublin on 12 April when Liverpool FC Legends will play Republic of Ireland Legends in a charity game in aid of the Sean Cox Rehabilitation Trust.

The two sets of greats will go head-to-head in a bid to raise money to fund vital rehabilitation care for Sean, who suffered life-changing injuries when he was the victim of an unprovoked attack outside Anfield ahead of the Champions League semi-final against AS Roma last April.



ALL THOSE YEARS AGO...

3 years since that incredible Anfield night against Borussia Dortmund on 14 April 2016.
14 years since Champions League victory over Juventus on 5 April 2005.
18 years since Gary Mac's penalty helped the Reds beat Barcelona in the UEFA Cup semi-final on 19 April 2001.
30 years since 96 fans lost their lives at Hillsborough on 15 April 1989.
31 years since that famous 5-0 win over Nottingham Forest on 13 April 1988.
41 years since the Reds reached the European Cup final with a 3-0 win over Borussia Moenchengladbach on 12 April 1978.
42 years since the Reds reached their first European Cup final by beating FC Zurich on 20 April 1977.
59 years since Ian Callaghan made his LFC debut on 16 April 1960.

And it's 55 years since the famous 5-0 defeat of Arsenal secured the Division One title in 1964.

Liverpool still had three league fixtures remaining after this clash with the Gunners but the majority of the 48,623 crowd arrived at Anfield anticipating that they would end the afternoon with plenty to cheer.

A 3-0 win at Burnley four days earlier meant a Liverpool win over Billy Wright's side would put Shankly's best out of the reach of second-placed Manchester United.

It would also secure a first adventure in the European Cup the following season.

Ian St John calmed nerves with a seventh-minute goal and when Alf Arrowsmith added a second before the break, the Reds were on course.

A sign of the club's growing ambition under Shankly meant some supporters were also able to enjoy proceedings from the new 6,700-capacity cantilevered Kemlyn Road stand which had been built in time for the start of this season at the cost of a hefty £350,000.

Flying winger Peter Thompson struck twice in the space of six minutes and by the hour-mark it was five as Roger Hunt scored his customary goal.

Liverpool's achievement in being crowned top-flight champions in their second season back among the elite was celebrated with glee although with the Football League championship trophy unavailable for presentation, Reds skipper Ron Yeats made do with one hand-made by a local football-mad family, the Curletts!



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Ian Callaghan
77 on 10 April

Sadio Mane
27 on 10 April

Marko Grujic
23 on 13 April

Rafael Benitez
59 on 16 April

Divock Origi
24 on 18 April

Steve Finnan
43 on 20 April



Martin Kelly
29 on 27 April

Dominic Matteo
45 on 28 April

Christie Murray
29 on 3 May

Amy Rodgers
19 on 4 May

Jess Clarke
30 on 5 May

Ashley Hodson
24 on 5 May













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AUGUST		SCORE/KO	TV	SCORERS
12	**West Ham United (H)**	**4-0**	**sky**	**Mane 2, Salah, Sturridge**
20	Crystal Palace (A)	2-0	sky	Milner (pen), Mane
25	**Brighton and Hove Albion (H)**	**1-0**	**BT**	**Salah**
SEPTEMBER				
1	Leicester City (A)	2-1	sky	Mane, Firmino
15	Tottenham Hotspur (A)	2-1	sky	Wijnaldum, Firmino
18	**Paris St-Germain (UCL, H)**	**3-2**	**BT**	**Sturridge, Milner (pen), Firmino**
22	**Southampton (H)**	**3-0**		**Hoedt (og), Matip, Salah**
26	**Chelsea (CC3, H)**	**1-2**	**sky**	**Sturridge**
29	Chelsea (A)	1-1	BT	Sturridge
OCTOBER				
3	Napoli (UCL, A)	0-1	BT	
7	**Manchester City (H)**	**0-0**	**sky**	
20	Huddersfield Town (A)	1-0	BT	Salah
24	**Red Star Belgrade (UCL, H)**	**4-0**	**BT**	**Firmino, Salah 2 (1 pen), Mane**
27	**Cardiff City (H)**	**4-1**		**Salah, Mane 2, Shaqiri**
NOVEMBER				
3	Arsenal (A)	1-1	BT	Milner
6	Red Star Belgrade (UCL, A)	0-2	BT	
11	**Fulham (H)**	**2-0**	**BT**	**Salah, Shaqiri**
24	Watford (A)	3-0		Salah, Alexander-Arnold, Firmino
28	Paris St-Germain (UCL, A)	1-2	BT	Milner (pen)
DECEMBER				
2	**Everton (H)**	**1-0**	**sky**	**Origi**
5	Burnley (A)	3-1		Milner, Firmino, Shaqiri
8	Bournemouth (A)	4-0	sky	Salah 3, Cook (og)
11	**Napoli (UCL, H)**	**1-0**	**BT**	**Salah**
16	**Manchester United (H)**	**3-1**	**sky**	**Mane, Shaqiri 2**
21	Wolverhampton Wanderers (A)	2-0	sky	Salah, Van Dijk
26	**Newcastle United (H)**	**4-0**		**Lovren, Salah (pen), Shaqiri, Fabinho**
29	**Arsenal (H)**	**5-1**	**BT**	**Firmino 3 (1 pen), Mane, Salah (pen)**
JANUARY				
3	Manchester City (A)	1-2	sky	Firmino
7	Wolverhampton W (FA Cup 3, A)	1-2	BBC	Origi
12	Brighton and Hove Albion (A)	1-0		Salah (pen)
19	**Crystal Palace (H)**	**4-3**		**Salah 2, Firmino, Mane**
30	**Leicester City (H)**	**1-1**	**BT**	**Mane**
FEBRUARY				
4	West Ham United (A)	1-1	sky	Mane
9	**Bournemouth (H)**	**3-0**		**Mane, Wijnaldum, Salah**
19	**Bayern Munich (UCL R16 1, H)**	**0-0**	**BT**	
24	Manchester United (A)	0-0	sky	
27	**Watford (H)**	**5-0**		**Mane 2, Origi, Van Dijk 2**
MARCH				
3	Everton (A)	0-0	sky	
10	**Burnley (H)**	**4-2**	**BT**	**Firmino 2, Mane 2**
13	Bayern Munich (UCL R16 2, A)	3-1	BT	Mane 2, Van Dijk
17	Fulham (A)	2-1	sky	Mane, Milner (pen)
31	**Tottenham Hotspur (H)**	**2-1**	**sky**	**Firmino, Alderweireld (og)**
APRIL				
5	Southampton (A)	8pm	sky	
9	**FC Porto (UCL q-f 1, H)**	**8pm**	**BT**	
14	**Chelsea (H)**	**4.30pm**	**sky**	
17	FC Porto (UCL q-f 2, A)	8pm	BT	
21	Cardiff City (A)	4pm	sky	
26	**Huddersfield Town (H)**	**8pm**	**sky**	
30/1	UCL s-f 1			
MAY				
4	Newcastle United (A)	3pm		
7/8	UCL s-f 2			
12	**Wolverhampton Wanderers (H)**	**3pm**		
JUNE				
1	UCL final			



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NEIL MELLOR

In praise of two full-backs who give Liverpool so much in defence and on the front foot

Liverpool's full-backs have become very important for their contribution going forward, but nobody should underestimate how vital they are defensively.

Take the 2-1 victory against Spurs at Anfield, for example. On a few occasions Trent Alexander-Arnold stopped Dele Alli from getting free headers at the back-post while Andy Robertson prevented Christian Eriksen from scoring a tap-in with a goal-saving block.

A lot has been made of their personal battle for the most assists, but these are defensive contributions that could be easily missed and would have been devastating for Liverpool if they hadn't done such defensive work so well.

Robertson made the position of left-back his own last season, but Alexander-Arnold had to be patient as Joe Gomez also played right-back last season. Gomez's injury has given Trent the opportunity to mature and make the position his own and his decision-making now is that of a mature player.

He doesn't dive in, he makes the right decisions defensively and while he may occasionally get caught out of position – as he did when Spurs scored – he positioned himself far more often to prevent goalscoring opportunities.

Trent wasn't a right-back when he first started at the Academy so it's credit to him that he can read the game, influence things and recognise danger – which you have to do as a defender – despite having not always played there.

It's also credit to the Academy coaches for developing a player that didn't have to be sent out on loan but could play at Premier League and Champions League level. That has saved the club an awful lot of money.

On the other side of the pitch Robertson's ability to cross the ball is there for all to see, but I think his personality and work-rate is what really endears him to the fans. He's humble, really likeable and Liverpool supporters have had a long-standing affiliation to Scottish players.

It's been a while since Liverpool have had a Scottish presence in the team and left-back has previously been a problem position, but Robertson defends well, gets up and down the left with pace and has an excellent crossing ability.

His assist for Roberto Firmino's goal against Spurs was his ninth of the season in the Premier League. Only Eden Hazard (11), Christian Eriksen and Ryan Fraser (both 10) have been credited with more. You'd expect attacking players like Hazard and Eriksen to be up there but not Robertson playing at left-back.

Trent is only just outside the top 10 assist makers in the league on six – one less than Mo Salah – and that shows the importance of both full-backs to this Liverpool team.

There is an argument to say they should both be scoring more goals because they get forward a lot, but they influence things in the final third by being in positions to cross the ball. Goals from full-backs are always a bonus, but they contribute far more creatively and as a former centre-forward I appreciate how good their service is.

They don't delay their deliveries into the penalty area by taking an extra touch. You know the ball is coming in straight away and from an attacking point-of-view their team-mates know they can gamble and take the risk of getting into the penalty area because the ball is coming in.

Firmino's header against Spurs was a great example. It was a fine finish but he knew Robertson was going to deliver that cross so could make the run between two defenders to meet the ball.

Often you will see three or four Liverpool players in the box trying to get on the end of crosses from Robertson or Alexander-Arnold because they trust the quality will be good and don't have to delay their runs.

People talk about Liverpool having luck in games this season, but for me the real luck has been keeping many of our key players fit throughout the season. Salah, Virgil van Dijk and Alisson have played in every game, Firmino has only missed one, Sadio and Robertson two.

That consistency has been vital and if we can keep those players on the pitch and contributing in the way our full-backs have, this Liverpool team is capable of winning things.



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